

DOCE CANCIONES MEXICANAS: A SINGER'S GUIDE TO MANUEL M. PONCE'S (1882-1948)

ROMANTIC MEXICAN ART SONG AS DESCRIBED IN HIS ESSAY

"LA CANCIÓN MEXICANA"

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The underrepresentation of Mexican art song has left classical singers with few Spanish-language repertoire options. Currently, the music of Spain dominates this scene and Mexican art song has yet to earn a place in academic curricula and concert halls. Manuel María Ponce (1882-1948) retains an important position in Mexican music. However, Ponce's vocal repertoire—consisting of over 150 songs—remained dormant for many decades after his death due to its misclassification by music aristocrats in Mexico that greatly affected their diffusion. Consequently, few copies were published during Ponce's life, making them difficult to find. The need in the singing community for repertoire of this kind has raised many questions not only about its existence and availability, but also about its origins and relationship to the established Art Song canon. To promote the diffusion of this underrepresented repertoire, a style analysis of Ponce's Romantic Mexican Art Song is offered through the lens of his writings about Mexican song. The analysis includes vital information about the origins, form, style, and subjects of these songs. Tangible examples of these traits are provided from Ponce's *Doce canciones mexicanas* along with historically-informed suggestions for singers and translations of the text with IPA transcriptions.

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

There is a lacuna in the dissemination of the vocal literature of Mexico that has left modern performers in the United States and Europe with limited options when selecting art song repertoire in Spanish. Currently, the music of Spain predominates this art song scene, as represented by composers such as Enrique Granados (1867-1916), Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), Fernando Obradors (1897-1945), Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999), Joaquín Turina (1882-1949), and Xavier Montsalvatge (1912-2002). Unluckily, Mexican Art Song has not had significant diffusion as it remained dormant for many decades. Although efforts have been made in the last ten years to support the diffusion of this repertoire in Mexico, this has not been the case in the United States. The need in the singing community for repertoire of its kind has raised many questions not only about its existence and availability, but also about its origins and style.

There are, however, numerous excellent Mexican composers to whom singers might turn. Manuel Maria Ponce (1882-1948) retains a position of significance in the history of Mexican music. His immense output spans musical genres, including solo instrumental, vocal, chamber, and symphonic music. Ponce's primary instrument was the piano, therefore, he composed most of his works for this instrument. Likewise, his guitar works are of significant relevance, a considerable number of which were written in partnership with famous Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia. These compositions have become a vital part of the guitar repertoire and are often performed in competitions and recitals.

As for his vocal compositions, he composed over 150 songs, including early folk song arrangements for voice and piano, original songs for voice and piano, and his modern song cycles for voice and piano. Through his popular song arrangements, Ponce created a connection between Mexican vernacular music and classical art song. He borrowed many folk-motives and worked them into his classical compositions; these motives also served as inspiration for new works with an authentic local color that earned him recognition as a founding figure of Mexican musical nationalism.¹ Experts refer to Ponce as a founding figure because, although other composers had made efforts to write Nationalistic music before Ponce, he was among the first composers to research folk music, harmonize it, and use it as inspiration for the majority of his classical works. In this way, Ponce paved the way for future composers to explore and develop the genre.²

Unfortunately, the vast majority of Ponce's vocal music remains unknown to the singing community despite the clear successes of his song "Estrellita." The European tradition was the usual style accepted in Mexico at music conservatories and in concert halls in the first decades of the twentieth century. Vocal music written by foreign composers such as the greatest Italian masters—primarily romanzas and opera arias—were usually taught to and performed by the singing community as the only acceptable standard in song repertoire.³ Consequently, it is no surprise that Ponce's new vocal style was subject to criticism from its inception with many

¹ Esperanza Pulido, "Diversos aspectos del nacionalismo musical de Manuel M. Ponce," *Heterofonía* 18, no. 90 (July-September 1985): 1-45; Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel M. Ponce: A Bio-bibliography*, (WestPort CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 6; Paolo Mello, "Manuel M. Ponce, músico polifacético," *Heterofonía* 15, no. 79 (October-December 1982): 24-30; Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce: Ensayo sobre su vida y obra* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998): 29-32.

² Pulido, "Aspectos del nacionalismo Manuel M. Ponce," 50.

³ Manuel M. Ponce, "Notas sobre música mexicana," in *Nuevos escritos musicales* (Mexico City: Stylo, 1948), 25-26.

musician aristocrats and commentators viewing his songs merely as informal folk music rather than a fusion of both folk and classical styles. Ponce himself talked about his new style in an essay he wrote titled “La canción mexicana” (1913).⁴ In this essay, Ponce explains the origins of this new style and shares his vision to blend vernacular and folk themes with formal accompaniments of simple harmonies. He sought to create a new platform for indigenous sounds in the concert performance hall.

Ponce’s contributions to the cultivation of the *canción mexicana* in the 1910s—both his compositions and his prose—have been understood primarily in relation to the cultural politics of the Mexican revolution.⁵ The aforementioned preference for European music was tied to supporters of deposed President Porfirio Díaz. His removal from power thus afforded opportunities to reconstruct Mexican identity, a process in which Ponce seems to have been involved actively, albeit in complicated ways.⁶

For the modern singer, however, these rich circumstances have served to generate only confusion and—ultimately—neglect. Miscategorizations of Ponce’s songs during that time created a barrier between Ponce’s vocal music and its international diffusion. This neglect was compounded by circumstances following his death. Although a vast number of compositions were published during Manuel M. Ponce’s lifetime, the small number of copies published made

⁴ Manuel M. Ponce, “La canción mexicana,” *Revista de Revistas* 4, no. 199 (21 December 1913): 17-18; Ponce, *Gaceta Musical* (1 March 1914); Ponce, “Estudio sobre la música mexicana,” *Cultura* 4, no. 4 (1 July 1917): 17-26; Ponce, “La canción mexicana,” in *Escritos y composiciones musicales*, Foreword by Rubén M. Campos, *Cultura* 4, no. 4 (1 July 1917).

⁵ See especially Leonora Saavedra, “Manuel M. Ponce’s Chapultepec and the Conflicted Representations of a Contested Space” *The Musical Quarterly* 92 no. 3/4 (2009): 279-328. For more on the Mexican Revolution, see Christon Archer, “Fashioning a New Nation,” in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶ Saavedra, “Ponce’s Chapultepec and Conflicted Representations,” 279-285.

them difficult to find over time. With the exception of his guitar compositions (popularized by Andrés Segovia) publishing houses that remained in operation stopped printing them due to low demand. Moreover, there is still a considerable percentage of Ponce's output that remains unpublished to this date.⁷ This is in part because Carlos Vázquez, a student of the composer, inherited Ponce's compositions after his death and held them in his personal library for many decades. In 1998, Vazquez finally donated Ponce's musical heritage to the Escuela Nacional de Música de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Since then, an editorial project was founded in Mexico City (Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce) with the main goal of cataloging and publishing Ponce's music in a series of collections. Currently, these publications remain exclusively available for in-person purchase at the Escuela de Música UNAM. These publications have, moreover, focused on instrumental works. Twenty-eight collections have been published since the editorial project was founded in 1998, but only two of them have been vocal collections. One of those two vocal collections is the subject of study in this dissertation, Ponce's *Doce canciones mexicanas*, written around 1912, yet edited and released only in 2008.⁸

The purpose of this dissertation is to introduce and contextualize Manuel M. Ponce's Romantic Mexican Art Song style for singers in search of new Spanish-language repertory. To do so, I turn to Ponce's essay "La canción mexicana," which I have translated and contextualized both in relation to Ponce's biography and to the political climate of the time. By reading his

⁷ Paolo Melo, "Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce," *Revista Digital Universitaria Escuela Nacional de Música UNAM* 7, no. 2 (February 2006).

⁸ Manuel M. Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas para voz y piano*, ed. Paolo Mello, (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008).

work closely and in context, I develop a clearer understanding of how Ponce understood the style of the *canción*, and what he hoped to achieve by arranging these melodies. These insights in turn inform my guide to performing Ponce's *Doce canciones mexicanas* by highlighting the contextual significance of musical gestures and textual themes. Additionally, I provide an English translation of the Spanish poetry along with International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions, thus creating a performer-friendly edition of one of the two vocal collections currently available by Ponce to support its global diffusion. I present classical singers with the tools needed to prepare a comprehensive performance of this previously underrepresented repertoire.

1.2 Significance and State of Research

Manuel M. Ponce and his music have been the subject of numerous studies, the most significant of which have focused either on his instrumental works, or the impact of the revolutionary political context on his work. In this literature review, I focus on those sources most relevant to my research, considering the usefulness of each and demonstrating how my project both builds upon and stands apart from previous work.

For biographical information on Ponce, I have relied heavily upon the work of Ricardo Miranda. His 1998 book *Manuel M. Ponce: Ensayo sobre su vida y obra* is the only comprehensive biography on Ponce in any language.⁹ His research has guided mine, as it offers extensive information and detailed facts about the life of the Mexican composer from his upbringing to his death. Miranda also presents historical information about political

⁹ Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce: Ensayo sobre su vida y obra*.

circumstances, as well as material about his personal life, successes, failures and commentary from Ponce's contemporaries. Additionally, this book offers a comprehensive list of Ponce's musical output and includes selections from articles published about the composer up until 1998. These lists, however, are now over twenty years old. Ponce has since received significant attention resulting in numerous new articles and critical editions of his music. Despite being somewhat outdated, this book has been essential for my research because the Spanish text offers access to literary content without losing nuance in translation. While Miranda offers a complete biography and catalogue, my research solely focuses on Manuel M. Ponce's Romantic Period (1882-1915) and his folk song arrangements.

Another compelling biographical resource, Jorge Barrón Corvera's *Manuel María Ponce: A Bio-bibliography* was published in 2004.¹⁰ He provides summated biographical information about Manuel M. Ponce. Unlike Miranda, he covers Ponce's life in a condensed style. Barrón focuses on Ponce's professional career, considering his training, education, professional posts, travels, and the impact of the political atmosphere of the time. He does not, however, include much detail about Ponce's personal life and struggles. Undoubtedly, the strongest section of this book is the annotated bibliography. Barrón offers an extensive and detailed list that includes all articles and dissertations written about Ponce (up until 2004, articles written by Ponce, and an updated music catalogue that references all pieces composed by Ponce in every genre. Such work has been possible by Barrón's close involvement with the Editorial Project Manuel M. Ponce. I have depended upon the research of this author for bibliographical

¹⁰ Corvera, *Ponce: A Bio-bibliography*.

references, especially those pertaining to Mexican folk music and the *canción popular mexicana*. Barrón also published two entries specifically on Ponce's songs in *The Journal of Singing*: "Manuel M. Ponce's Song Cycles: Selected Harmonic Aspects," and "Seis Poemas Arcaicos for Voice and Piano by Manuel M. Ponce."¹¹ Although both articles focus on Ponce's later Modern period, they have raised some awareness of Mexican Art Song in the United States and are useful for comparing Ponce's early *canciones* from his Romantic period to his Modern period song cycles.

The research work of Paolo Mello has been key to the diffusion of Ponce's music. He has written several articles about Ponce, mainly about his Nationalistic style and the composer's newly acquired musical archives.¹² His influence as the coordinator of the Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce in which he oversees the cataloguing, editorial, and publishing processes has been relevant for this dissertation, especially his critical commentary and program notes included in the two vocal collections published up to date by the Proyecto, incorporated in the recent edition of *Doce canciones mexicanas*, which is the subject of study of this dissertation.¹³

Connections between Ponce's songs from the 1910s and the political climate of the Mexican Revolution are drawn most clearly and convincingly in the work of Leonora Saavedra, starting in her dissertation "Of Selves and Others: Historiography, Ideology, and the Politics of

¹¹ Jorge Corvera, "Manuel M. Ponce Song Cycles: Selected Harmonic Aspects," *Journal of Singing* 72, no. No. 1 (September/October 2015): 23-32; Corvera, "Seis Poemas Arcaicos for Voice and Piano by Manuel M. Ponce," *Journal of Singing*, (May/June 2018): 499-512.

¹² Paolo Mello, "Manuel M. Ponce, músico polifacético," *Heterofonía* 15, no. 79 (October-December 1982), 24-30; Mello, "Hacia una nueva lista de las obras de Ponce," *Heterofonía* 31, No. 118-119 (January-December 1998): 231-236; Mello, "El Album de amor de Manuel M. Ponce," *Boletín de la Escuela Nacional de Música de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* 4 (April 2000): 6-9; Mello, "El nacionalismo musical de Ponce (primera parte)," *Boletín de la Escuela Nacional de Música de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* 4 (May-June 2000): 10-13.

¹³ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas*.

Modern Mexican Music (Manuel Ponce, José Vasconcelos, Carlos Chávez)” and developed in her more recent scholarly publications “Manuel M. Ponce’s Chapultepec and the Conflicted Representations of a Contested Space” and “Manuel M. Ponce y la canción mexicana.”¹⁴

Crucially, Saavedra documents Ponce’s complex attitudes toward the *canción* and his desire to arrange them more artfully.¹⁵ While she connects these attitudes to political divisions, my project is ultimately interested in untangling and explaining the consequences of those circumstances for the stylistic and musical choices of modern singers.

Several scholars have considered the connections between Ponce’s political circumstances and musical style. Foremost among them is Alejandro Madrid, whose 2008 book *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* focuses on the historical events that led to the modern and avant-garde compositional styles in Mexico, including works by many Mexican composers such as Ponce.¹⁶ While my project ultimately focuses on a slightly earlier period and singles out Ponce, Madrid’s work remains relevant especially for providing a model for how to connect politics and style. Such connections have been pursued in several DMA theses on Ponce, including Omar Herrera Arizmendi’s “Manuel M. Ponce: Style and Esthetics”¹⁷ and Dahlia Guerra’s “Manuel M. Ponce: A Study of his Solo Piano

¹⁴ Leonora Saavedra, “Of selves and others: historiography, ideology, and the politics of modern Mexican music (Manuel Ponce, José Vasconcelos, Carlos Chávez)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2001): 356; Saavedra, “Manuel M. Ponce’s Chapultepec and the Conflicted Representations of a Contested Space” *The Musical Quarterly* 92, No. 3/4 (2009): 279-328; Saavedra, “Manuel M. Ponce y la canción mexicana” *Heterofonía* 142 (Enero-Junio 2010):155-182.

¹⁵ Saavedra, “Chapultepec and Conflicted Representations,” 283-284.

¹⁶ Alejandro Madrid, *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and the Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 224.

¹⁷ Omar Herrera Arizmendi, “Manuel M. Ponce: Style and Esthetics” (DMA diss., University of Houston, 2012), 49.

Works and his Relationship to Mexican Musical Nationalism.”¹⁸

My project also benefits from comparing Ponce’s attitudes regarding indigenous music to those he likely encountered while studying in Europe. The Mexican composer explicitly mentions the Lieder style of Johannes Brahms as a model in his essay “La canción mexicana.” Two recent articles offer an important overview of these ideologies. Natasha Loge’s “How to make a ‘Volkslied’: Early models in the songs of Johannes Brahms” presents evidence that Brahms’s oeuvre embraced dozens of folksong arrangements as well as original settings of texts drawn from printed folksong collections. Brahms explicitly described folksong as his ideal for lied composition, writing: “Songs are sailing such an erroneous course nowadays that one cannot impress the ideal too sharply upon oneself. And that’s what folksong is for me.”¹⁹

Similarly, Sindhumathi Revuluri’s article “French Folk Songs and the Invention of History” offers a French parallel to the *canción popular* in Mexico. Revuluri states collectors of French *chansons populaires* (including composers like Vincent d’Indy) would usually add new harmonic accompaniments to the songs they researched before publishing them.²⁰ Although my research is focused on the *canción popular* of Mexico, these articles help me understand the nature of the European influence that Ponce references in his prose.

In working through Ponce’s writings on the *canción*, it is helpful to have access to musical examples of Mexican songs beyond those he cites. To that end, I consult folklorist

¹⁸ Dahlia Guerra, “Manuel M. Ponce: A Study of his Solo Piano Works and his Relationship to Mexican Musical Nationalism,” (DMA diss., The University of Oklahoma, 1997), 173.

¹⁹ Natasha Loges, “How to make a ‘Volkslied’: Early Models in the songs of Johannes Brahms,” *Music & Letters* Vol. 93, No. 3 (20 August 2012): 316-149.

²⁰ Sindhumathi Revuluri, “French Folk Songs and the Invention of History,” *19th Century Music* Vol. 39, No. 3 (2016): 248-271.

Vincente Mendoza's *La canción mexicana: Ensayo de clasificación y antología*, a 1961 collection of melodies.²¹ Such a collection allows me to provide the reader with further examples of musical features and texts that Ponce describes in his prose.

While my project builds upon much of the work cited here, my audience and goals are different. I hope to offer singers a well-researched, clear summary of Ponce's work on the *canción*, built on a close, contextualized reading of sources—including a translation of one rarely cited essay that speaks candidly about musical style—culminating in a performance guide that considers the composer's well-documented views of what he was trying to achieve by working with this genre. Unlike existing historical research, my historical work is meant to help singers make sense of Ponce's style and approach to the *canción*, offering an informed perspective on how to perform this music.

²¹ Vicente T. Mendoza, *La canción mexicana. Ensayo de clasificación y antología* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982).

CHAPTER 2

PONCE'S FORMATIVE YEARS

2.1 Manuel M. Ponce's Early Years: 1882-1904

Manuel Maria Ponce was born on December 8, 1882 to a large family of twelve children in which he was the youngest child.²² He was born during his family's short stay in the small town of Fresnillo in the state of Zacatecas. At this point, Mexico was managed by the liberal party through the presidency of Benito Juárez (from 1858 to 1872), and later through the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1877–80, 1884–1911). The Ponce family, originally from Aguascalientes, was forced to move to the city of Fresnillo due to their political affiliation with the conservative empire of Maximiliano de Habsburgo (1832-1867), an Austrian archduke who received significant financial and political backing from France.

The governing period of Maximiliano is also known as the "Second Mexican Empire" that took place between 1864 and 1867. Habsburgo was coronated Emperor by a Mexican Assembly of Notables in agreement with the government of Napoleon III to establish a monarchy modeled after the French empire. His régime was allied with the conservative party in Mexico and the catholic church. Although Maximiliano's empire brought many legislative advances, his reigning period lasted only three years. In 1867, the liberal forces lead by Benito Juárez defeated the monarch's troops. Consequently, Maximiliano was tried and sentenced to death. After the fall of the Second Mexican Empire, the Mexican Republic reclaimed complete

²² Barrón, *Manuel María Ponce*, 1.

power under the liberal leadership of Benito Juárez, Mexico's first president of indigenous origin.²³

Ponce's father had served Maximiliano during imperial times; therefore, the political instability that began with the emperor's fall left the family with no option but to seek refuge in Zacatecas. Three months after Ponce's birth, the family moved back to their original home in the city of Aguascalientes, under protection from the governor Francisco Rangel.²⁴ This was the place where the young Manuel grew up. These surroundings would impact him significantly. During an interview about his upbringing, the composer shares: "Next to my passion for the piano... I felt a great love for the countryside. The orchard and landscape surrounding Aguascalientes, fascinated me. That was something with an eternal-like quality, always ready to enchant me...."²⁵ Manuel's admiration for natural scenery with picturesque views would later influence his song writing.

The young Ponce was exposed to European musical traditions from an early age since formal music training had been cultivated as a family tradition on his father's side. Thus, it is no surprise that Manuel started taking piano lessons at an early age from his sister Josefina (the fourth child) who later became an accomplished piano teacher.²⁶ Manuel's gift for the instrument was apparent as he progressed rapidly and surpassed the scope of his sister's

²³ Brian Hamnett, "Mexican Conservatives, Clericals, and Soldiers: The 'Traitor' Tomás Mejía through Reform and Empire," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20, No. 2, (April 2001): 198-204.

²⁴ Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce: Ensayo sobre su vida y obra* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998): 13.

²⁵ Hernán Rosales, "Manuel M. Ponce," in *La niñez de personalidades mexicanas* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934).

²⁶ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 14.

teachings. The young Ponce was then sent to take formal piano lessons with the lawyer and local piano teacher Don Cipriano Avila.²⁷ At the age of five, the young Manuel became ill with chickenpox. Upon his recovery, he took inspiration from that experience and wrote his first composition titled “La Danza del sarampión” (The measles dance).²⁸

The Ponce family was devoutly religious and participated in Mass frequently. Manuel’s brother, Antonio (the third child) became ordained as a priest and was assigned to the temple of San Diego in Aguascalientes. Consequently, Manuel found himself deeply involved in church activities and became a member of the choir at the age of ten. Ponce found the church music scene to be the perfect place to hone his artistic talents. Between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, he advanced from assistant to principal organist at his brother’s parish.²⁹ Manuel’s position as church musician provided him with the necessary music fundamentals to spark his composing creativity. By 1900, Ponce had written a considerable number of piano pieces. The composer himself reports he composed regularly from the age of ten.³⁰

When Manuel M. Ponce was eighteen years old, the young composer decided it was time to bring his musical aspirations to fruition, and in 1900, Ponce embarked on a trip to Mexico City to begin piano studies with Vicente Mañas (a pianist of Spanish descent) and music theory with Eduardo Gabrielli (an organist and composer of Italian descent).³¹ After a year of preparation, in 1901 he enrolled in the Conservatorio Nacional de Música to pursue a degree in

²⁷ Barrón, *Manuel María Ponce*, 1.

²⁸ Hernán Rosales, “Manuel M. Ponce,” *La niñez de personalidades mexicanas* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934), 90.

²⁹ Jesús C. Romero, “Efermérides de Manuel M. Ponce,” *Nuestra Música* 5, no. 18 (April-June 1950): 164-165.

³⁰ Fradique, “Encuestas de ‘Zig-Zag.’ Confesiones de artistas. Manuel M. Ponce,” *Zigzag* (June 1921): 28-29.

³¹ Romero, “Efermérides,” 132-133.

music. However, despite his previous training, members of the academic bureaucracy insisted Ponce commence the degree from scratch before progressing to advanced courses. For the young composer, this unforeseen setback represented a waste of time and effort. After a short period of time, he decided to return home to Aguascalientes. The composer would later recall:

The director refused to take into consideration the studies I had already completed... and that compelled me to return to Aguascalientes, where I gave private lessons and was the organist for the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco, until 1904, when without any official backing, I decided to go to Europe.³²

Once in Aguascalientes, the composer earned a living by teaching piano lessons and solfege at the Academia de Música del Estado. Additionally, he wrote articles for the local newspaper *El Observador* and offered occasional piano recitals.

The period between 1902 and 1903 is considered of vital importance in Ponce's artistic development as he befriended two legendary artists: Ramón López Valverde (a poet) and Saturnino Herrán (a painter).³³ The three comrades would gather every night to exchange artistic ideas and patriotic principles that represented rural life and Mexican landscape. These meetings influenced Ponce's search for a Mexican musical identity, and he would incorporate these newfound ideals in his subsequent compositions.

In this period, Ponce began the quest for Mexican Nationalistic musical ideas. Ponce's compositions increased exponentially in quantity and included his first "harmonizations" of Mexican folk songs.³⁴ The composer would later recall:

³² F. Gómez Hidalgo, "Creadores de México. El maestro Ponce," trans. Jorge Barrón, *Estampa* (2 February 1943): 15-16.

³³ Carlos González Peña, "Manuel M. Ponce en la música y en la vida," *El Universal* (8 August 1946): 3.

³⁴ Rafael Mendivil, "La música de ayer y hoy," *Todo* (1943): 32-33.

Every night, I got together with Herrán and Ramón at the Jardín de San Marcos [a park in the city of Aguascalientes]. We talked about Mexican art. Of the three, the one who produced the greatest work was Ramón: [the poem] *La Suave Patria*.³⁵

1904 was a year of great adjustment and change for the composer as he decided to make a living as a full-time performer. Manuel kept a high performing profile giving piano recitals in the Mexican cities of Guadalajara (at Teatro de La Paz) and San Luis Potosí (at Teatro Degollado).³⁶ After his national tour, the composer considered a trip to Europe, more specifically Italy.

2.2 Italy, Germany, Mexico: 1905-1908

Ponce's idea to travel to Europe had originated in 1901 during his theory and composition lessons with maestro Eduardo Gabrielli in Mexico City. The Italian musician offered to write an introduction letter to maestro Marco Enrico Bossi (organist, composer, and director of the Liceo Musicale de Bologna) on Ponce's behalf. Gabrielli's encouragement, along with Manuel's negative experience at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, pushed the composer to search for more promising opportunities in Europe. On his way, he made stops in Saint Louis, Missouri and New York City where he performed two more piano recitals.³⁷ Manuel M. Ponce departed from New York aboard the ship *Hohenzollern*, taking with him more than forty of his own works.³⁸ He arrived in Naples on December 31, 1904. Ponce's residence in Italy was funded by his savings and money received via the sale of his grand piano. Later, his new

³⁵ Manuel M. Ponce, "El maestro Ponce trabaja a pesar de su enfermedad," trans. Jorge Barrón, *El Universal*, (10 December 1947).

³⁶ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 17.

³⁷ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 17.

³⁸ Barrón, *Manuel María Ponce*, 4.

teachers Bossi and Krause would kindly arrange for him to teach private lessons.³⁹

In the early months of 1905, Ponce auditioned for maestro Marco Enrico Bossi to garner admission into the Liceo Musicale de Bologna. The Mexican composer performed his own compositions for the audition: *Estudio de Concierto No. 3*, *Improntu*, *Bagatelas*, and *Bersagliera*.⁴⁰ After hearing Ponce play, maestro Bossi shared this with Ponce:

God has granted you the main elements, which are inspiration and intelligence... It is necessary to have a solid foundation and to know the inalterable music laws of counterpoint, and then –undoubtedly– one should compose according to the time period's demands. In 1905 one should write music of 1905... or even of 1920, but never music from 1830. My duties keep me from accepting you as a student, but I will refer you to maestro Dall'Olio, who was Puccini's mentor. That way you will have, though distantly, an illustrious fellow-student.⁴¹

Upon recommendation from Bossi, Maestro Cesare Dall'Olio accepted Ponce as a student. Unfortunately, the young composer did not receive many composition lessons as the great Italian master died in early 1906. Consequently, Manuel decided to depart Italy in search of improved educational opportunities in Germany.

In December 1905, Ponce arrived in Germany. There, he studied piano with Edwin Fischer, who helped him prepare his audition for a spot in Martin Krause's piano studio at the Stern'sches Konservatorium in Berlin.⁴² Kraus was a celebrated pupil of Liszt and later would become the

³⁹ Miguel Ángel Mendoza, "Manuel M. Ponce," *Cartel* (29 May 1947): 22-23.

⁴⁰ A.A. [Agustín Agüeros], "Artistas mexicanos. Manuel María Ponce, pianista y compositor aguascalentense," *El Tiempo Ilustrado* (30 September 1906): 559.

⁴¹ "Dios le ha dado lo principal, que es la inspiración e inteligencia [...] Es necesario tener una base sólida y saber las leyes inmutables de la música que están en el contrapunto, aunque después –indudablemente– se debe componer según las exigencias de la época. En 1905 se debe escribir música 1905... o hasta música de 1920, pero jamás música de 1830. [...] Mis ocupaciones me impiden aceptarle como alumno, pero lo recomendaré con el maestro Dall'Olio que lo fue de Puccini; así tendrá usted, aunque lejano, un condiscípulo ilustre." Romero, "Efermérides," 167-168.

⁴² Agüeros, "Ponce pianista y compositor."

teacher of Claudio Arrau.⁴³ This period of study under the tutelage of Krause, was key in the pianistic development of the Mexican composer, as he acquired the skills necessary for mastery of the instrument. This would not only reflect on Ponce's future solo career, but also in his piano compositions and accompaniments of Liszt-like virtuosity. Despite Ponce's efforts, however, the Mexican composer was not able to acquire financial stability, and after a twelve-month-period, was forced to return to his homeland. Before departing, Ponce offered a farewell concert in which he was introduced by his mentor Martin Krause to the audience in an important concert hall in Berlin. The young pianist considered this event to be a milestone in his career. He stated:

I experienced the most intense musical emotion when I was introduced by my teacher Krause at the Beethoven Halle' in Berlin. One of the most important halls in Germany. I felt I would not be able to achieve my purpose in front of such commanding audience... But, happily, I had no mishap.⁴⁴

Three days after his special concert, Ponce left Europe and arrived in Mexico, December 1906.⁴⁵

Although Ponce's time in Europe was brief, he progressed significantly as both a performer and a composer. During this period, the composer also explored the composition of music for instruments other than the piano. Furthermore, Ponce's exposure to European music traditions broadened his horizon and brought validation to his views toward Mexican music. While in Italy, the composer experienced first-hand the popularity of his Mexican folk-song arrangements amongst his friends. One such example is the celebrated lyric tenor Emilio Venturini, who enjoyed singing Ponce's songs: *Marchita el Alma*, *Ven oh luna*, *La Barca del*

⁴³ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 21.

⁴⁴ "Mi más intensa emoción artística la experimenté cuando fui presentado por mi maestro Krause en la 'Beethoven Halle' de Berlín. Es una de las primeras [salas] de Alemania, y sentí que no iba a poder realizar lo que yo me proponía ante ese gran público imponente... Pero, felizmente, no tuve ningún contratiempo." Fradique, "Confesiones de Manuel M. Ponce," 28-29.

⁴⁵ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 22.

marino, and *Perdí un amor*.⁴⁶ Likewise, in Germany he received counsel from his fellow musicians about the importance of folk music and, they encouraged him to explore the genre. Proof of this is the going-away present given to him by his colleagues: the section of a book dedicated to Mexico which belonged to a folk music collection from around the world, compiled and published by Albert Friedenthal titled *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern, Tänzen und Charakterstücken* (Voices of the Peoples in Songs, Dances and Character Pieces).⁴⁷ These affirmations motivated him to continue researching Mexico's vernacular music in pursuit of inspiration for a new style.

2.3 Ponce, El Porfiriato, and the New Vernacular Sound: 1907-1915

After his European travels, Manuel M. Ponce arrived in Aguascalientes, January 1907, and remained there until June of 1908. He maintained a low profile during this time and focused his talents on teaching and composition. In June 1908, Ponce was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime to become professor of piano at the country's leading music institution, the Conservatorio Nacional de Música in Mexico City. This invitation was extended by the newly appointed director, composer Gustavo E. Campa, who was seeking to fill the vacancy left by the late great composer and piano virtuoso Ricardo Castro. Luis Moctezuma Campa, a mutual friend of Manuel M. Ponce and the new director Gustavo E. Campa, had arranged an audition for Ponce to obtain the position. The director Campa recollects:

I need not say I fell in love as much with his delicate and discrete artistic execution, as with his elegantly written, ingenuous and, inspiring compositions, but perhaps I was more attracted to his intelligence and modesty.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Mendivil, "La música de ayer y hoy."

⁴⁷ Barrón, *Manuel María Ponce*, 5; Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 22; Romero, "Efermérides," 168.

⁴⁸ Campa, Gustavo E. "Manuel M. Ponce," *El Universal Ilustrado* (3 August 1917).

Once in Mexico City, Ponce quickly became part of dignified social circles of Mexico's capital and befriended members of a distinguished group of intellectuals that called themselves "Ateneo de la Juventud" (Atheneum of Youth) founded in 1909. This was a distinguished group of revolutionary intellectuals that included writers, philosophers, poets, painters and musicians. Amongst the most distinguished members of this group were José Vasconcelos, Antonio Caso, Alfonso Reyes, Enrique González Martínez, Diego Rivera, Manuel M. Ponce, Julián Carrillo and Luis G. Urbina.⁴⁹ Through his camaraderie with these scholars, Ponce was granted access to elite social events where he had the opportunity to display his talents. Slowly, Manuel started to earn his place as an important Mexican music figure of the *fin de siècle*.

Around this time, Ponce initiated a life-long commitment to the music of his country that earned him recognition as one of the pioneers of Nationalism in Mexican music.⁵⁰ In the article "Notas sobre la música mexicana" (Notes about Mexican music), Ponce wrote:

Beginning in 1910, a century after our Independence, Mexican song was able to enter in the halls of a society that had only admitted foreign music, Italian romanzas and opera arias. The doors were being opened at the precise moment in which the revolutionary cannon was announcing in the North the imminent storm.⁵¹

Ponce's Romantic Period coincides historically with the government of Mexican General Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915). Díaz was Mexico's self-proclaimed dictator of 30 years (1877–80, 1884–1911). In 1880, after governing for three years, he decided not to seek re-election. Instead, Díaz

⁴⁹ Gabriel Vargas Lozano, "El Ateneo de la Juventud y la Revolución Mexicana," *Literatura Mexicana* 21, No. 2 (18 February 2010): 27-38.

⁵⁰ Barrón, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 6.

⁵¹ "A partir del Centenario de nuestra Independencia, en 1910, la canción mexicana pudo entrar en los salones de una sociedad que sólo admitía música extranjera, romanzas italianas, arias de ópera. Se le abrían las puertas en los precisos momentos en que el cañón revolucionario anunciaba en el Norte la tormenta inminente." Manuel M. Ponce, *Nuevos Escritos Musicales* (Mexico City: Editorial Stylo, 1948): 25.

handpicked his successor General Manuel González.⁵² Dissatisfied with his successor's ideals, he decided to run for presidency again in 1884 and won. Porfirio Díaz's government was known as "El Porfiriato." Though controversial, his leadership brought about many positive advancements for the Mexican Republic. Díaz produced an orderly and systematic government with a military spirit. The upper social classes benefited greatly as he encouraged the utilization of the country's natural resources through the investment of foreign capital. This, however, marginalized the lower working class. Mexico's new wealth was not distributed fairly among social classes with most of the profits being sent overseas or lining the pockets of few wealthy Mexicans.⁵³ By 1910, the economy had deteriorated. With wages decreasing, strikes were imminent and agricultural workers were faced with extreme poverty and debt. The country's situation had reached a position of instability that caused disagreement and contentment from the working class.

On February 17, 1908 Díaz publicly announced his retirement from power. This caused political turmoil in the country while new candidates quickly began campaigning. Amongst them was Francisco I. Madero who toured the country in search of political support. As a result, Díaz changed his mind and decided to run for re-election. Soon thereafter, Madero was arrested by the Porfirian government under sedition charges. Miraculously, Madero escaped from the San Luis Potosí state prison and fled to the United States. On November 20, 1910,

⁵² J. Gonzales. "Imagining Mexico in 1910: Visions of the Patria in the Centennial Celebration in Mexico City," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, No. 3 (Aug. 2007): 495-533; Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, No. 1 (Feb. 1996): 75-104; L. S. Rowe, "The Mexican Revolution: Its Causes and Consequences," *Political Science Quarterly* 27, No. 2 (June 1912): 281-297.

⁵³ Rowe, "Mexican Revolution," 284.

Madero resurfaced in San Antonio, Texas and proclaimed the “Plan de San Luis” in which he called upon the Mexican pueblo to retaliate against the government of Porfirio Díaz, thus launching the Mexican Revolution.

The Mexican pueblo, deprived of any political involvement and oppressed to submission for thirty years under the Porfiriato, responded to Madero’s call and fought to free themselves from the dictatorship. The Revolution movement originated in the northern states and once it reached Ciudad Juárez in the state of Chihuahua, Porfirio Díaz resigned office. On May 25, 1911 Díaz was exiled to France. Spanish-Mexican musicologist Otto Mayer-Serra explains:

The Porfirio Diaz epoch (1877-1911) turned the country over to foreign capital, which became the true master of all aspects of national life. Fashion, architecture, and social customs were all shaped after the reigning Parisian model.⁵⁴

During the years following the Revolution, inspiration arose amongst Mexican nationals to organize a collective search for an authentic sense of patriotism, or “mexicanismo.” Ponce traced this patriotic development to the centennial celebration of Mexico’s independence from Spain in September 1910.⁵⁵ This event was organized extravagantly by the Porfirio Díaz administration shortly before the onset of the Revolution. Mexican musicologist, Leonora Saavedra discusses its significance for Ponce and the history of the Mexican *canción*:

Commemorations of historical dates tend to awaken feelings of patriotism amongst citizens of the same nation. In them, the state puts before the citizens’ eyes a particular representation of the nation that can be assimilated or contested and therefore provide a stimulus for competing representations. It was during the time of the centenary, Ponce argued, that the popular genre of the Mexican canción first entered the salons of the upper-class.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Otto Mayer-Serra, *El estado presente de la música en México*, trans. Frank Jellinek (Washington, D.C.:Pan American Union, 1946), 2.

⁵⁵ Manuel M. Ponce, "Notas sobre música mexicana," *Nuevos escritos musicales* (Mexico City: Stylo, 1948), 9-27.

⁵⁶ Saavedra, “Chapultepec,” 2.

In 1912, Manuel M. Ponce took on the special mission to collect, classify, and harmonize dozens of Mexican folk songs. Additionally, he composed numerous original songs, the most famous being *Estrellita*. The composer also multiplied his output of piano works and gave them titles that reflected his nationalistic inclinations. For example, *Tema mexicano variado* (1912), *Rapsodias mexicanas* (1911 and 1913), *Balada mexicana* (1915).⁵⁷

By this time, Manuel M. Ponce was not only a composer of high stature, but also a renowned editor, writer, and lecturer. He used these platforms to promote his ideas of nationalism to composers and Mexican audiences alike so they would realize the intrinsic value of their vernacular music. A clear example of this was his 1913 lecture “La música y la canción mexicana” (Music and Mexican song). His efforts were subject to great controversy amongst music intellectuals. In 1952, one of Ponce’s pupils, composer Carlos Chávez recalled: “Cultured people regarded Ponce’s intention as an unfortunate deviation toward vulgarity.”⁵⁸ This commentary by Chávez speaks to the predisposition from Mexican elite groups to associate vernacular music with unrefined traditions, a custom cultivated by political influence.

Regarding the same topic, Ponce offered the following assessment in 1938:

The young musician [Ponce], who in those far-gone days initiated the work of preserving and dignifying the little popular tunes, was accused of making music that smelled like huarache [Indian sandals].⁵⁹

In this context, the term *huarache* is used disparagingly to reference the humble background of the popular tunes Ponce was fond of and not in the traditional manner to depict the footwear

⁵⁷ Barrón, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 6.

⁵⁸ Carlos Chávez, “La música de México, Primera Etapa 1900-1915,” *El Universal* (14 March 1952).

⁵⁹ Manuel M. Ponce, “Música popular y música vulgar,” trans. Jorge Barrón, *El Popular*, (26 June 1938).

characteristic of indigenous Mexicans. As mentioned before during El Porfiriato epoch, Mexican society had been influenced by political authorities that mirrored all aspects of social life after European traditions. Ponce's ideals conflicted with these traditions; his principals aimed to find a true Mexican identity that no longer shadowed foreign trends. Consequently, this created an environment of disapproval and criticism towards Ponce's vernacular inspiration.

In the midst of these controversies, Ponce sought to balance sources of inspiration from both Mexico and abroad. The period around 1912 in Ponce's life is considered to be the most prolific and was inspired by his quest for Mexican vernacular sounds. These principles coincided perfectly with some of the fundamental ideals of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920): to recover forgotten Mexican traditions, to erase discrimination against vernacular philosophies, and to end the artificial virtues of a culture that searched for its own identity on the other side of the ocean.⁶⁰ He continued his study of Mexican music, introduced ethnomusicology into the academic curriculum, and became the leading expert in this field.⁶¹

Yet Manuel also made consistent efforts to stay current in his knowledge and maintain a connection with modernist music trends overseas, hence his early trips to Italy and Germany (1905-1906) and later to France (1925-1933). A prime illustration of Ponce's connection to what was in vogue overseas was the origination of an "all-Debussy" recital in Mexico during June 1912. This groundbreaking event was performed in Mexico City by Ponce's piano students who, and for the first time in the history of the country, devoted the entire concert solely to the

⁶⁰ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 30.

⁶¹ Carmen Sordo Sodi, "La labor de investigación folklórica de Manuel M. Ponce," *Heterofonía* 79, No. 4 (Octubre-Noviembre-Diciembre 1982): 36.

music of Claude Debussy. The reviews from the general audience were positive. However, the composer later reminisced the criticism he received from conservative music groups:

To a young teacher that had the boldness to present with his students, more than a quarter of century ago in the Sala Wagner in Mexico, a recital incorporated with music by Debussy, they accused him, then, of perverting the good taste of the young pianists.⁶²

This time, however, the criticism received was not aimed toward Ponce's vernacular ideals; the disapproval came from an audience that was only accustomed to the sonorities of Romantic music and rejected the modernist trends of Debussy that Ponce attempted to advocate.

Manuel M. Ponce's efforts culminated in a concert of his own works on July 9, 1912 presented in Mexico City. That evening, the composer premiered his first *Concierto para piano y orquesta*, under the baton of Julián Carrillo. That night there were two added premiers: *Tres cuadros nocturnos* (for string orchestra), and *Trio para piano*. Moreover, Ponce played the piano for the performances of his compositions *Tema variado mexicano* and the inaugural *Rapsodia mexicana*.⁶³ This concert was a resounding success, and Ponce's historic performance consummated him as the most important Mexican figure in the music scene. Ponce's compositions were not simply arrangements or ornamentations of folk melodies but an authentic metamorphosis of the material. The author preserves the original melody and dresses it with harmonic resources and pianistic effects that give the composition a new face. He transforms *canciones populares* into virtuosic passages, fugues, or harmonic modulations that create classical concert scores.⁶⁴

⁶² Romero. "Efermérides," trans. Jorge Barrón, 171.

⁶³ "Concierto en la Sala Wagner, un triunfo del maestro Ponce," *El Imparcial* (June, 1912).

⁶⁴ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 29.

Following the success of his 1912 concert, Manuel María Ponce presented a lecture on December 13, 1913 entitled “La música y la canción mexicana” (Music and Mexican Song). This was a historical event in which the composer manifested his views regarding his own national style and discussed how integral of a role the *canción popular* factored into this new genre. The talk was received with such admiration that a few days later it was published in the magazine *Revista de Revistas*, then a few years later (1917) it appeared in the music magazine *Cultura*, and one last time shortly after Ponce’s death (1948) in the music review *Nuevos escritos musicales*. In the lecture, Ponce included the following statement:

A centennial after our Independency in 1910, the Mexican song was able to enter the halls of a society that accepted foreign music only, Italian romanzas and opera arias. The doors were opening [to the Mexican song] in the precise moments in which the revolutionary cannon announced in the North the imminent storm. But, from the rumble of the bloody fights the songs that the soldiers were carrying from one side of the country to another were being born. *La Adelita, la Valentina, la Cucaracha* are *cantos* that were made popular by the Revolution. Groups of *cancioneros* (song books) were exchanging the vernacular melodies. Thus, the republic felt the need to cultivate an art that was a loyal embodiment of our life.⁶⁵

Amongst the attendees of this conference, special guest Gustavo E. Campa (Director of the National Conservatory) made an appearance. His testimony is of vital importance as it represents the voice of an authoritative figure in the Mexican music scene and also the opinion of a conventional composer with traditional views. Campa commented:

At the end of his conference the author [Ponce] posts a fair desire, that, as a resemblance of what had been done in Europe by Grieg, Brahms, Dvorak, Glinka, and

⁶⁵ “A partir del Centenario de nuestra Independencia, en 1910, la canción mexicana pudo entrar en los salones de una sociedad que sólo admitía música extranjera, romanzas italianas, arias de ópera. Se le abrían las puertas en los precisos momentos en que el cañón revolucionario anunciaba en el Norte la tormenta inminente. Pero entre el fragor de las luchas sangrientas nacían las canciones que los soldados llevaban de un extremo a otro del país. *La Adelita, la Valentina, la Cucaracha* son cantos que la Revolución hizo populares [...] Grupos de *cancioneros* efectuaban el intercambio de las melodías vernáculas, y así fue como en toda la República se sintió la necesidad de cultivar un arte que fuese fiel expresión de nuestra vida.” Ponce, “Notas sobre la música mexicana,” 25-26.

many others, we dignify our Mexican *cantos populares*; this way giving its own individual nature to our national art. In my opinion, such desire is sane, but suggested by Ponce shows a new trait of his proverbial humbleness. Indeed, no one like the young artist [Ponce] has explored in Mexico, before today, our popular muse, promoting, transcribing, imitating, and utilizing as inspiration, a noble number of our fancied *cantos*. As if he were absent, Ponce always thinks of this poor nation of ours, beloved and wounded; and in this immense tempest that seems to drag us to the abyss, he aims [Ponce] to maintain our art afloat by elevating the sweetest *cantos* torn from our people's soul that, now more than never, agonize and weep. Blessed is the artist that dreams, hopes and trusts! Your desires are my desires.⁶⁶

In the ensuing years, Ponce penned many compositions that were not characterized by a direct nationalistic intention. These included pieces for piano, art songs, and chamber music, as well as his first orchestral works that marked his early incursion into large-scale compositions.⁶⁷ In fact, Carlos Chávez credited Ponce as being a pioneer in the use of large forms in a country dominated by the prevalence of small salon pieces.⁶⁸

By 1915 the country was facing an unstable political period caused by the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution which lasted ten years. With it, social and economic crises invaded the streets of a nation full of hopelessness. Consequently, Manuel Maria Ponce was forced to abandon the country to embark on a new journey. This time he traveled to Cuba with his friends Luis G. Urbina (poet) and Pedro Valdés Fraga (violinist). The composer left behind his

⁶⁶ "En la conclusión de su conferencia expone el autor el deseo justísimo de que, a semejanza de lo que en Europa hicieron Grieg, Brahms, Dvorak, Glinka, y tantos otros, dignifiquemos en México nuestros cantos populares, procurando dar así carácter propio al arte nacional. A mi juicio, tal deseo es sano, pero expuesto por Ponce acusa un nuevo rasgo de su proverbial modestia. En efecto, nadie como el joven artista, ha explotado hasta hoy en México la musa popular, propagando, transcribiendo, imitando y utilizando para obras de aliento, una buena parte de nuestros cantos más selectos. Como si fuera un ausente, piensa siempre Ponce en esta pobre patria nuestra, tan adorada como adolorida; y, en esta inmensa borrasca que parece arrastrarnos al abismo, pretende sacar a flote nuestro arte elevando los más dulces cantos arrancados al alma del pueblo que, ahora más que nunca, sufre y llora." Gustavo E. Campa, "La conferencia de Manuel M. Ponce sobre la música popular mexicana," *Gaceta Musical* 10, no. 1 (1 January 1914).

⁶⁷ Barrón, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 7.

⁶⁸ Jesús C. Romero, "Manuel M. Ponce, Premio Nacional," *Nuestra Música* 3, no. 10 (April 1948): 97.

fatherland, family, and beloved girlfriend Clementina Maurel (who would later become his wife). The composer explained:

I fulfilled the post [professor of the conservatory] until the year of 1915, when we found ourselves immersed in full revolution: without trolleys, without light, without food, without knowing who governed us, in a truly chaotic situation...⁶⁹

Since the Conservatory no longer existed and nobody took private lessons with me, I could no longer earn a living. I decided then to search elsewhere and I went to Havana in 1915. There I found concerts, disciples, in short, everything I no longer had in Mexico.⁷⁰

Ponce's departure from Mexico marks the end of his Romantic Period, an era in which the composer focused on vernacular and nationalistic ideals that served as inspiration for his *canciones mexicanas*.

2.4 Havana, Paris, Mexico City: 1915-1948

Manuel M. Ponce lived in Havana, Cuba from 1915 to 1917. While living there, he wrote numerous articles for the periodicals *La Reforma Social* and *El Heraldo de Cuba*. Ponce's source of income was teaching via the music school he founded, the Academia Beethoven. During this period Manuel actively performed and composed, and his pieces exhibited Cuban influences that would resurge in his later works. Compositions from this period include *Suite cubana*, *Elegía de la ausencia*, *Preludio cubano*, the operetta *Blanca nieve y los siete enanos*, and *Ofrenda* for voice and piano with lyrics by his Cuban poet friend, Mariano Brull.⁷¹ Moreover, on March 27, 1916, Ponce traveled to New York and performed a piano recital composed

⁶⁹ F. Gómez Hidalgo, "Creadores de México. El maestro Ponce," trans. Jorge Barrón, *Estampa 2* (February 1943): 15-16.

⁷⁰ Mendoza, "Manuel M. Ponce," trans. Jorge Barrón, *Cartel* (29 May 1947): 22-23.

⁷¹ Corvera, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 9.

exclusively of his own works. There, he had the great honor of playing for Enrique Granados, with whom he was able to exchange musical ideas about nationalism. Ponce reminisced about their conversation:

It was in the hotel Biltmore in New York, where Granados, in a most cordial interview, encouraged me to continue pursuing my modest attempts of stylization of popular melodies. We are taking different paths to the same goal, he said. Yes, maestro, I answered, but the path you follow is fully illuminated by the sun of your talent and sown by the roses of your ever youthful inspiration. The song “Valentina” powerfully caught his attention. He asked me to play it again and approved with enthusiasm my harmonization of that popular *canto*. That interview, aside from the personal satisfaction it brought me, is important and relevant for our folklorism efforts because Granados’s opinion in this field is fully respectable and it confirmed the beliefs I have been fostering from a few years back, that the creation of our own musical art is feasible, first small and poor, and vigorous and great later.⁷²

Ponce returned to his homeland and established residence in Mexico City from 1917 to 1925. Upon his arrival, he was immediately appointed conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional. Additionally, he was offered teaching posts at the Conservatorio Nacional, and in 1920, at the Escuela Preparatoria de la Universidad Nacional de México. Furthermore, he taught at his private academy. On September 3, 1917, Clema and Manuel married. The couple stayed together until Ponce’s death and never had children. This period was the most prolific in respect to writings and publications during Ponce’s lifetime. Ponce’s *Escritos y composiciones musicales* (Musical writings and compositions) was published in 1917 and included articles

⁷² “Fue en el hotel Biltmore de Nueva York donde Granados, en cordialísima entrevista, me alentó para proseguir mis modestos trabajos de estilización de melodías populares. Vamos por distintos caminos al mismo fin, me dijo. Si, maestro, le contesté: pero el camino que usted sigue está iluminado plenamente por el sol de su talento y sembrado de rosas de su inspiración siempre juvenil. La ‘Valentina’ llamó poderosamente su atención. Quiso que yo la tocara de nuevo y aprobó con entusiasmo la armonización de ese canto popular. Esa entrevista, aparte de la satisfacción personal que me proporcionó, tiene importancia para nuestros trabajos de folclorismo, puesto que la opinión de Granados es de todo punto respetable y vino a confirmar la creencia que he alimentado hace muchos años, de que es factible la creación de un arte musical nuestro, pequeño y pobre primero, vigoroso y grande más tarde.” Manuel M. Ponce, “La importancia del folclorismo musical en la formación del alma nacional,” *Plural* 17, No. 196 (January 1988): 31.

about Mexican music. Amongst them were “Estudios sobre la música mexicana” and “La canción popular”—both editorials referenced, translated and analyzed in this dissertation. Due to Ponce’s heavy teaching load, he had little time to compose. Only a few pieces are attributed to this period and amongst them are his *Balada mexicana* for piano and orchestra and *La mort* for voice and piano or voice and orchestra with text by R. Tagore. During 1923, he also met Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia in Mexico City. Segovia had been trying to elevate the guitar from its marginalized place in classical music to the concert scene. Therefore, Segovia asked many composers— Ponce being the most active—to compose classical pieces for the instrument. Manuel wrote a vast number of compositions, per the Spanish guitarist’s request, that Segovia in return recorded and published on Ponce’s behalf. This created a wonderful friendship and music partnership between the two artists that garnered Ponce great acclaim and recognition in the field of classical guitar.

The Mexican composer made efforts to further his education and thus self-sponsored a trip to France. Ponce subsequently lived in France from 1925 to 1933. Once there, he enrolled in the Ecole Normale de Musique and attended the composition class of Paul Dukas. The group of students in the class was a diverse and cultured one and contained musicians like Joaquín Rodrigo. Along with composition lessons at the Ecole, Ponce also registered for harmonic instruction from Nadia Boulanger.⁷³ In 1932, Ponce received his long-awaited degree in composition. During his epoch in France, Manuel founded the music magazine *Gaceta Musical*. Although the magazine was not in print long, it consisted of important contributions from

⁷³ Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 58.

distinguished musicians of the time such as Manuel de Falla, Joaquín Rodrigo, Paul Dukas, Darius Milhaud, Joaquín Turina, and Ponce under the pseudonym Noé Mac Ulpmen.⁷⁴

After his stay in Paris, Ponce returned once more to Mexico. This is his final stage as he lived in Mexico City from early 1933 until the time of his death in 1948. Between the years of 1933 to 1946, Manuel M. Ponce held numerous teaching posts at higher education institutions such as the Conservatorio Nacional, Escuela Universitaria de Música, and the Departamento de Bellas Artes and taught courses in music history, pedagogy, esthetics, folk music, rhythmic gymnastics, composition, music analysis, and folk music. He was also chairman of both the Conservatorio de Música (1933 to 1934), and the Escuela Universitaria (1945 to 1946).⁷⁵ Then, in 1936 he founded the distinguished journal *Cultura Musical* sponsored by the Conservatorio de Música. Several of the most influential articles from this magazine were included in the book *Nuevos escritos musicales*, published posthumously in 1948. Also, during this period, Ponce introduced—for the first time in academia—a college course dedicated to folk music and ethnomusicology at the Escuela Universitaria de Música and in 1939 became chair of the Academy of Folk Studies at the Conservatorio Nacional.⁷⁶

Ponce's compositions from this period portray a mature musical sense with experimental features that lean towards a modernist style. His pieces include his *String quartet*, *Trio* for strings, and his first song cycles for voice and piano *Cuatro poemas de Francisco A. de*

⁷⁴ This pseudonym results from rearranging the order of the letters in Ponce's name.

⁷⁵ Corvera, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 17.

⁷⁶ Romero, "Efermérides," 181-186.

Icaza (1936-1937), *Tres poemas de Enrique González Martínez* (premiered in 1939), and *Seis poemas arcaicos* (ca. 1938).⁷⁷

Upon his return to Mexico, Ponce suffered from poor health that quickly deteriorated. Because of this, he was forced to resign all his posts in 1946. Ponce dedicated his entire life to the research and diffusion of Mexican music; his tireless work and countless accomplishments were finally acknowledged near the end of his career. Ponce was awarded with numerous accolades and amongst them was the most prestigious Premio Nacional de Artes y Ciencias (National arts and sciences award). He was the first composer to be esteemed with this award and collected the generous sum of “twenty thousand pesos.”⁷⁸ Manuel commented about his award:

Hope is reborn with the certainty of completing the works that illness and economic problems had almost converted into unrealizable dreams.⁷⁹

Sadly, this recognition came shortly before Ponce’s health became critical. On April 24th, 1948 Ponce died due to an attack of uremia. The following is an homage written by Andrés Segovia dedicated to Ponce in 1948 after his death:

Anyone who loves the instrument—let alone those who have professed its religion—unless they be hard-hearted and empty-headed, must revere the memory of Ponce. He lifted the guitar from the low artistic state in which it had lain. Along with Turina, Falla, Manén, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Tansman, Villa-Lobos, Torroba, etc. But with a more abundant yield than all of them put together, he undertook the crusade full of eagerness to liberate the beautiful prisoner. Thanks to him—as to the others I have mentioned—the guitar was saved from the music written exclusively by guitarists.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Corvera, *Manuel M. Ponce*, 19.

⁷⁸ Romero, “Premio Nacional,” 97.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, trans. Jorge Barrón, 98.

⁸⁰ Andrés Segovia, “Manuel M. Ponce, notas y recuerdos,” trans. Olga Coelho and Eithne Golden, *Guitar Review* no. 7 (1948): 3-4.

CHAPTER 3

PONCE'S ESSAY "LA CANCIÓN MEXICANA"

3.1 Introduction to Manuel M. Ponce's Essay "La canción mexicana" (1917).

Ponce's 1917 essay "La canción mexicana" reflects the circumstances described in the previous chapter. Among these, his involvement with the "Atheneum of Youth" proved particularly important. This was an association integrated by sixty members that shared new intellectual ideals in response to the dictatorship of El Porfiriato. Its members included poets, philosophers, artists, and musicians that sustained important roles in the Mexican Republic. Through Ponce's membership in this group, he was given a public platform that allowed him to present lectures and write music articles about his views. From then on, the Mexican composer founded and held directorial positions for music magazines such as *Revista Musical de México* and *Gaceta Musical*. Although *Gaceta Musical* had a brief tenure, it became a prominent journal since Ponce included contributions from accomplished music figures such as Manuel de Falla, Joaquín Rodrigo, Darius Milhaud, Ruben M. Campos, Joaquín Turina, and Ponce himself under the pseudonym Noé Mac Ulpmen. Additionally, Ponce was the most prolific contributor to the magazine *México Moderno* and penned countless concert reviews for the Mexican newspaper *El Universal*.⁸¹ His output as a music critic and columnist comprised of over 100 music articles and essays, and over 70 concert reviews.

Yet the contents of the essay itself stem also from the constant criticism Ponce received from the music aristocracy regarding his attempts to dignify Mexican vernacular *cantos*.

⁸¹ Barrón, *Manuel María Ponce*, 11, 14.

Consequently, he formulated a response on December 13, 1913. This rebuttal first took the form of a lecture entitled “La música y la canción mexicana.” This address was his first, and its reception garnered such success among his Mexican audience that it was printed as an essay three days later in the magazine *Revista de Revistas*.⁸² In ensuing years, this text was published identically two additional times: once in 1917 and then in 1948 shortly after his death.⁸³ In the following section, I provide my English translation of the 1917 version of Ponce’s essay since this is the only version available in the Manuel M. Ponce archives under custody of the UNAM.

Ponce provides an introductory section in which he speaks generally about Mexican music, its origin, and characteristics. Next, he presents us with categories, including the *canción*. Ponce subsequently writes solely about the *canción mexicana* and includes his view on style, origin, subjects, categories, and his plans for art music.

3.2 English Translation of “Estudio sobre la musica mexicana” (A Study of Mexican Music)

I believe that our current *cantos* and *bailes populares* (popular songs and dances), originate from a relatively recent era, perhaps from the second half of the eighteenth century. The dominant music of that time period was Italian and extended its irresistible influence to Germanic composers like Haydn, Mozart, and the one and only Beethoven, who could not escape from it.

The influence Italian music had over other schools undoubtedly had an effect on the musical environment of Spain, later reflected upon our *canción popular* of ample melody and

⁸² Manuel M. Ponce, “La música y la canción mexicana,” *Revista de Revistas* (suplemento de navidad) 4, No. 199 (21 December 1913):17-18.

⁸³ Manuel M. Ponce, “Estudio sobre la canción mexicana,” *Cultura* 4, No. 4 (1 July 1917):17-26; *Nuevos escritos musicales*, “Notas sobre la canción mexicana,” (Mexico City: Editorial Stylo, 1948).

symmetry, much different from the *cantos populares españoles* such as *malagueñas*, *rondeñas*, *granadinas*, etc., that had an unmistakable melodic form. Instead, our dance songs derive directly from Spanish dances (*danzas españolas*).

What are the harmonic or melodic elements of Mexican music? The harmonic elements are poorest and the simplest, almost always applying the fundamental chords over the tonic, the dominant, and the subdominant. Rarely, one finds modulations to neighbor tonalities.

The dance accompaniments are monotone with the least harmonic importance; the melody, however, is frequently suggestive of a remarkable local flavor. Nevertheless, all dances lack melodic development, constant repetition over themes of two or four measures, deficiency in rhythms, and an unexplainable vagueness as the accompaniment is prolonged and repeated after the first verse.

The general character of Mexican music is sad and passionate, as passionate and sad as the *mestizo* that composed it.

It is profoundly sad-the desolate prairie when the afternoon dies at sunset; and with its death the hope for betterment and faith in human justice cease. The muddy farmer's unfortunate soul that returns from labor and from the remoteness of the mountains sees the first star shine, feels all the melancholy of his life, the burden of a useless existence, and as refuge for his own unhappiness, he hides his thoughts in the sweet memory of his rustic love. Thus, he sings his painful songs; consequently, a lament is born from his suffering heart that will transform into a sad song.

This is why Mexican songs speak constantly of love and sadness; they lack the high spirit of the Spanish songs full of overabundant notes and fermatas, the religious seriousness of the German *Lied*, the painful solemnity of the Czech *Dumka*, the heroic declamation of the

Hungarian *Lassan*, the spirituality of the French *Couplet*, and the beaming elegance of the Viennese Waltz. They are not comparable to any European song, but they encompass a little bit of pain, a little bit of love, and a little bit of the town's soul that has created it.

We could divide popular Mexican compositions in three categories:

1. Dance music
2. Religious Music
3. Canciones (Songs)

Dance music is said to be built exclusively of *jarabes*, because *habanera dances*, *schottische*, *waltzes*, *mazurkas*, *two-steps*, etc. are not vernacular music, but merely an imitation of European, North American, and Cuban dances. The Mexican national dance, without any doubt, is the *jarabe*.

Musically, the *jarabe* is a melodic phrase of great simplicity. The meter is frequently 6/8 and sometimes 3/4 or 2/4. The air is lively. Our *jarabe* is of Spanish origin, perhaps it derives from the *zapateado* or the *seguidillas manchegas* (from La Mancha), that originated in the 16th century.

La canción mexicana (Mexican Song)

La canción popular (Popular Song)

Popular song is the melodic manifestation of a town's soul. The town sings because it needs that exquisite form of expression to externalize its most intimate feelings. It is a relief for the soul of the commoners that suffer in silence, and it does not merely utilize words since only music can interpret its most hidden emotions. Therefore, music is the most ancient and the sweetest companion to humanity.

But not all social classes have been able to express their emotions through music; it

seems as if destiny, which has deprived so many of the commodities and pleasures that come along with wealth, has gifted those same helpless people with the treasure of an extraordinary musical sense, an uncommon sentiment, one that the aristocracy lack.

Therefore, song is a genuine product from the common people. Its origin was never in the golden salons nor did it come from dazzling magnates; it never emerged from an aristocratic soirée. The popular song was born in humble huts or in the most modest living places. It could not be the manifestation of suffering from the powerful man, because the suffering from the powerful evaporates between bubbles of champagne or is forgotten by the make of an automobile... No, it could not be the manifestation of a bourgeois love either because their love is content swinging to the waltz of Viennese operetta or is animated with the rascally rhythm of an American cakewalk. Popular song encompasses all: suffering, passion, love, jealousy, hope, disillusion, memories, sadness, and fleeting happiness of that social class condemned to brutal work and to the indifference of the conquerors.

Popular song could not have been born after a “five o’clock tea” or from a tennis match; it could not have surged from the tinted lips of an upper-class lady. It is simple like field flowers, sorrowful like the townspeople’s lives, sweet and gentle like a holy sunset; it brings in its melody the visions of happiness and the delirium of those poor little souls that pass through the world wandering the suffering path that their relentless destiny has marked for them.

Mexican popular song has been divided in two parts. In the first part, the melodic phrase is exposed plainly, which ends in the same tonality with which it was initiated (see Figure 1). The second part is constructed by two measures that repeat to complete the musical phase. Then, the *ritornello*, a characteristic of the end the first part, concludes the song (see Figure 2). All the beauty from these small compositions resides in their melody. As it may have become apparent,

the chords utilized to harmonize the song that I have written as an example, are the usual ones built on the tonic, the fifth, and the fourth scale degrees.

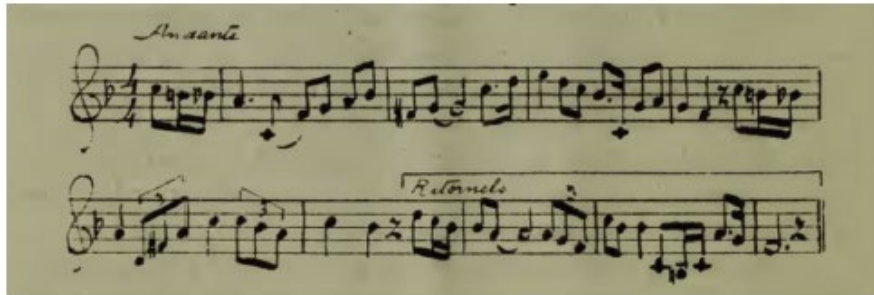


Figure 1: An example provided by Ponce showing the first section of the melodic phrase of the canción.⁸⁴

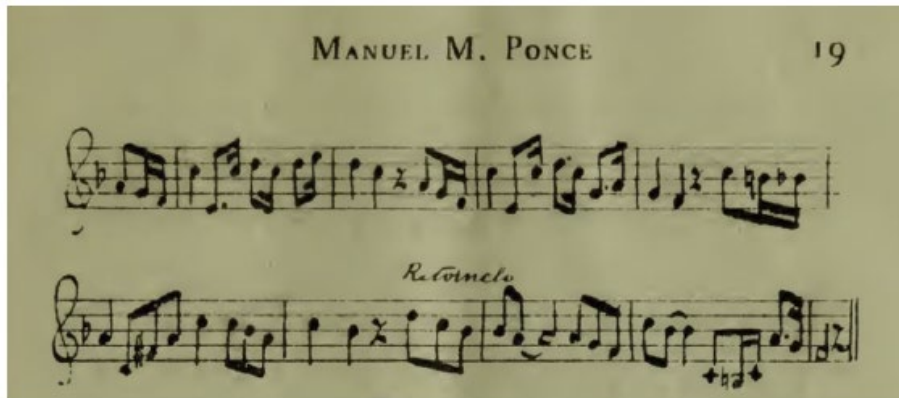


Figure 2: An example provided by Ponce showing the second section of the canción.⁸⁵

The melodic form of Mexican song is undoubtedly of Italian origin since it not only lacks the *tresillos* (triplets) and *fermatas* of the Spanish songs, but also the peculiar style of the German Lied.

Tres formas de canciones mexicanas (Three Types of Mexican Song)

Functioning as a foundation for the compositional processes mentioned previously, we can identify three types of Mexican songs:

⁸⁴ Manuel M. Ponce, *Escritos y composiciones musicales*, 18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

1. The song with ample and slow melody.
2. The song with rapid movement.
3. The song in triple meter and of moderate tempo.

However, all types preserve the characteristic *ritornello* and simple modulations. The following can be used as an example of a song with fast tempo originally from the mountain range of Chihuahua:

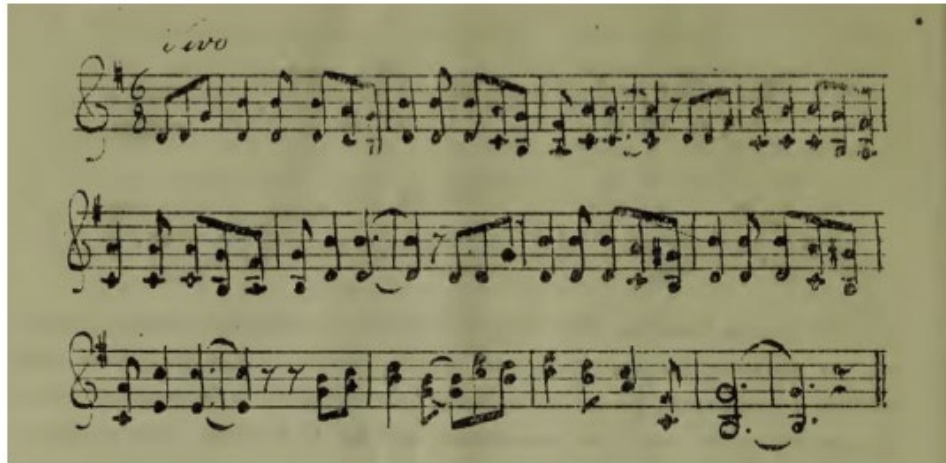


Figure 3: An example provided by Ponce of the song with rapid movement.⁸⁶

In this second type we find some novelties: the lively air (*vivo*), a danceable rhythm, and the compound 6/8 meter. Despite having the same meter as the Italian *Tarantella* and of the Spanish *Zapateado*, there is a substantial difference in the rhythmic processes (methods) used here, since, in this second type of Mexican song, one can find with frequency notes of small value tied to others of greater value that produce a restless and baffling effect (observe the third measure of the previous example).

The third type of song, composed in 3/4 time, possesses the air of a slow *Mazurka* and the same elements observed on the other forms (see Figure 4). This third type of song is found

⁸⁶ Manuel M. Ponce, *Escritos y composiciones musicales*, 20.

less frequently in comparison to the first song type with slow melody and in quadruple or duple meter, and sometimes lacks a second section.

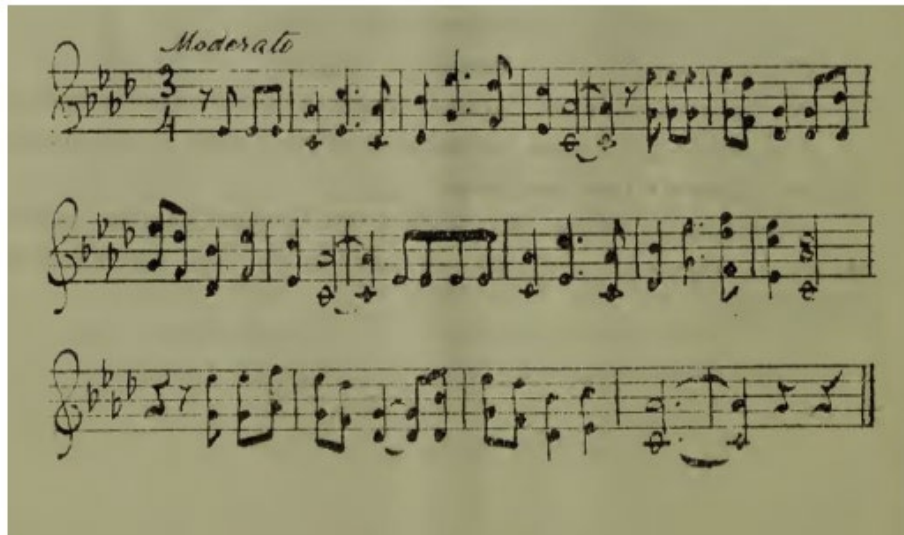


Figure 4: An example provided by Ponce of the song in $\frac{3}{4}$ time with a slow air.⁸⁷

There is amongst these songs in ternary meter a song whose anonymous author reached a notable level of great beauty. I am referring to *Las Mañanitas*, a popular song with a most noble melody of Beethovenian style. The popularity of this song is what gives me the liberty to mention it here.

Los asuntos de las canciones (Topics of the Songs)

Amongst the topics included in the popular song, one can frequently find (amongst others) love, suffering, jealousy, drunkenness, and occasionally a religious ideal such as:

Perdí un amor en quien yo tenía interés:	I lost the love I was interested in:
<i>Le ruego a mi Dios</i> que me borre de esta ilusión;	<i>I beg my God</i> to erase this illusion from me;
Porque si vuelve, otra vez le daría mi amor,	Because if it returns, once more I would give it
	my love,
Porque se halla triste y apasionado mi corazón.	Because my heart finds itself sad and passionate.

Or in this one:

⁸⁷ Manuel M. Ponce, *Escritos y composiciones musicales*, 20.

Con la esperanza, trigueña hermosa, yo te he querido;	With hope, beautiful brunette, I have loved you;
Con la esperanza, trigueña hermosa, yo te he adorado;	With hope, beautiful brunette, I have adored you;
Y estos trabajos que entre los dos hemos pasado,	And these struggles that between the both of us we have faced,
Con la esperanza de que un <i>Dios</i> nos premiará.	With the hope that one <i>God</i> will reward us.

In general, all poetry found in these popular songs is defective and irregular and proves they have been composed by individuals devoid of literary culture who express their ideas the best way they can. Frequently, one finds screams of true pain ripped from a tortured heart by suffering and desperation:

Desesperar del mundo y de la vida, Buscando paz, anhelando contento. Es horrible, es atroz mi sufrimiento, ¡Ay! Es muy triste ¡oh Dios! ¡oh Dios! Vivir...	Desperation from the world and life, Searching for peace, longing for content. It is horrible, my suffering is atrocious, Ah! It is so sad, oh God! Oh God! To live...
---	---

Composers of popular music have taken advantage of poetry by somewhat prestigious writers, and set music “musicking” to beautiful verses potentially written by a poor popular author that, in a literary weekly magazine (*semanario literario*), arrived to the priest’s home in a town lost amongst the mountain range. There are verses in which the poet’s hand is easily seen: a notable difference in sentiment and the use of poetic imagery. These traits are rarely used by popular authors:

Envidia causa a la apacible aurora Tu rostro angelical de perla y gana, Y es tu mirada ardiente y seductora Más pura que la luz de la mañana.	Envy causes the peaceful dawn, Your pearly angelical face and desire, It is your ardent and seductive gaze Purest than the morning light.
--	--

Or:

¿Qué haré lejos de ti, prenda adorada? Sin verte, sin oírte, sin hablarte; Inútilmente intentaré olvidarte Aunque sea imposible nuestro amor. ¿Cómo quitarle su murmullo al río? ¿Cómo arrancar del alma esta pasión?	What will I do far from you, dearest garment? Without seeing you, hearing you, talking to you; In vain I will attempt to forget you Though our love is impossible. How will I take away the river’s murmur? How can I rip this passion from my soul?
--	---

Drunkenness is the topic of many songs since alcoholism (disgracefully) is indispensable in the life of our town; it is the origin of many melodies that acquire great popularity because of their subject:

Vengo borracho, pero les cumplo, Vengo borracho de gusto y placer; Si bebo vino es por esa mujer. Nada les importa: cuiden su vida, Dejen la mía padecer...	I come drunk, but I carry out, I come drunk from taste and pleasure, If I drink wine it is because of that woman. None of this concerns you: worry about your life, Let mine suffer.
---	--

Another song with the same topic:

Yo me paso la vida borracho, Sin amores y sin un amigo, Pues la dicha gozada contigo Con tu muerte también se extinguió...	I spend my life drunk, Without lovers and without a friend, Because the happiness I enjoyed with you With your death has also extinguished...
---	--

Genesis de la canción popular (Genesis of Popular Song)

Camille Mauclair expresses, regarding the origin of popular songs, “It is impossible, except for a few rare cases and with great doubt, to determine the date in which the *Lied* made an appearance, the author of the lyrics, and the manner in which the music was set to the poem. The trail of a song, created from the commoner’s soul, is as intangible as the flight of a bird in the air...” Indeed, it would be nearly impossible to specifically identify the origin of a popular song. We can, however, assume most of these small compositions are the product of rural life where farmers are not polluted by the music of “small genres,” nor the unbearable North American “two step.” It seems as if the *canción* had found refuge in the field where the aforementioned musical plagues had no reach.

We would not be too far from the truth if we believe the conception of a *canto popular* occurs when the laborer, having finished his work, returns at sunset to his most humble room, where his elderly mother and young siblings await him; at one point, his heart feels an obscure anxiousness, a hidden desire to see her, the one that walked down with a jug on her shoulders to

fill up at the river, the one that smiled furtively at church in the solemnity of Sunday Mass, the one that has stolen his tranquility yet remains his pain and joy, the one he has engraved in his mind, and stored inside his heart...And then, at the mere memory of her, like a beautiful spell, life is beautified, the sky of his Mexico is bluer and more luminous, the flowers from the meadow more fragrant, the murmur of the river, most gratifying music; the songs from the birds, heavenly harmonies and that sunset gazed so many times without emotion, it now resembles nature's prayer that devotedly surrenders to God's majesty, that God of whom his parents have talked about, and now it speaks to his enamored rustic heart, the ineffable twilight's peace...Perhaps, in a similar instant more than one erotic song has been composed, a song that others and then others learned later without ever knowing the name of its author.

Un rapsoda mexicano (A Mexican Rhapsodist)

At all town fairs in the Republic there was a man that, for a number of years, had appeared regularly. A man of short stature and voluminous belly, of sallow color and chubby hands that caressed a filthy and cordless harp that was the only loyal partner of his restless and adventurous existence. This unique character was the town's artist, the one that in the middle of fireworks and the rumor of the crowd gathered at the fairs, would throw his highest *baritenor* notes accompanied by primitive chords on his shaken instrument.

This individual, whose name I do not know, stored in his mind an immense quantity of *canciones* that he would pick up during his ceaseless excursions along the Republic, and at the same time, he was the author of the music and *lyrics* of many other *cantos*. He had acquired great practice in the art of improvisation, and I recall perfectly *that* man dedicated a song to my father, a song composed in a very short period.

Without doubt this man contributed to the exchange of *cantos populares* amongst the

different regions of the country. Perhaps this true rhapsodist died in complete abandonment, covered by the ingratitude and the forgetfulness of the crowds to whom he brought joy with his most inspiring songs.

La obra de arte y la cancion popular (The Work of Art and the Popular Song)

The opus of international *folklorism* has had many intelligent disciples that, taking the popular melodies as precious material, have built sumptuous palaces of new harmonies that have enriched music literature, shown the world the soul of their respective towns, crystalized in its *cantos*, and embellished with the most brilliant celebrations of its elevated and noble inspiration.

Could something similar be attempted with the popular Mexican songs (*cantos populares mexicanos*)?

I believe there is a great deal of material to be explored and many beautiful melodies that could be transformed into symphonic themes, motives conducive to operas, or delicate thoughts of chamber music.

Dvorak created the miracle of building a beautiful string quartet with themes by Black Americans whose themes are, from a musical point of view, inferior to our own. Glinka and the *five* Russians have splendidly dignified the popular tunes from their homeland. The same has been done by Brahms, Chopin, Schubert, Grieg and many other illustrious composers. Hopefully, from the dawn of our musical horizon emerges a new day, the long-awaited birth of our *own* art.

And if by destiny's cruelty we were to suffer the unjust oppression from a community stronger than us, there would still be reason to strengthen our love for our nation: our incomparable blue sky, and the beautiful *canciones populares* that have been a symbol of our indestructible Mexican patriotism.

CHAPTER 4

DEDUCTIONS FROM PONCE'S TREATISE APPLIED TO THE COLLECTION

DOCE CANCIONES MEXICANAS

I consider a duty for all Mexican composers to ennoble the music of their motherland by giving it artistic form, by recoating it with the robe of polyphony and, by lovingly keeping the popular melodies which are the expression of the national soul.

Manuel M. Ponce

4.1 A Brief Overview of Ponce's Romantic Art Song Style

Manuel M. Ponce had showed interest in Mexican folk tunes years before the onset of the Mexican Revolution. Pablo Castellanos believes that by 1905 Ponce had already arranged many folk tunes in his idiosyncratic style. The style portrayed by Ponce in his early compositions is a conservative Romantic style. In this period, the composer had a special inclination for beautiful melodies; he either preserved the existing folk tunes while adding few modifications to his vocal arrangements or used the main tunes as *leitmotifs* for larger works. As he understood it, the authenticity of the *canción mexicana* is derived from its simpleness:

Mexican popular melody is like any other melody created by the pueblo, perfectly simple, as simple as the wildflower. In it, there are no deceptive cadences nor strange modulations; there is, however, a clearest tendency toward melancholy, desolation, and weeping... Melodic complications are excluded in the pueblo's melodies, as excluded are the complications in the construction of huts. Four walls made out of dirt and a branch roof build the house of the countryman, the architectural ornaments are unknown to those simple souls, as unknown are the musical ornaments in the popular songs. Thus, in those four bare walls is sheltered the maternal love and the heroism of hard work.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ "La melodía popular mexicana es, como toda melodía creada por el pueblo, perfectamente sencilla, tan sencilla como la flor silvestre. No hay en ella cadencias rotas ni modulaciones extrañas; hay, si, una tendencia marcadísima a la melancolía, a la desolación, al llanto. Las complicaciones melódicas están excluidas de la melodía del pueblo, como excluidas están las complicaciones en la construcción de los jacales o de los bohíos. Cuatro paredes de tierra y un techo de ramas forman la casa del campesino, los adornos arquitectónicos son desconocidos para esos espíritus simples, como los adornos musicales son extraños en las canciones populares. Pero así dentro de esas

Ponce's objective was to dignify the vernacular *cantos* and dress the simple melodies with harmonic and contrapuntal features so they would be accepted in the music salons and recital halls of the time. Ponce states:

Mexican song . . . was despised by our most prestigious composers and thus she hid herself, like an embarrassed young girl, hiding her plebeian origin and her lyric nakedness from the gaze of a society that would only welcome in its salons either foreign music or Mexican music with French titles.⁸⁹

Ponce achieved his goal by composing accompaniments for the songs that doubled the vocal part and had chordal structure. The inner voices display simple, yet contrapuntal features with moderately sophisticated chromaticism that provided rich harmonies. This, while following the rules of traditional music writing and neither leaving the home tonality nor adding unconventional modulations. The arrangements of the songs contain monotony. Ponce confesses the reason for this was to avoid pianistic technical difficulties that would have slowed the admission of the *canción* as a work of art in Mexican *salons*. In these salons, amateur female musicians were frequently tasked with playing songs at the piano and often lacked the knowledge to understand the complexity of counterpoint.⁹⁰

In the excerpts below, I provide music examples for what may be one of the first songs Ponce arranged (before 1905) successfully for voice and piano "Marchita el alma." In the first example, I present a popular version (see Figure 5) of this folk tune—presumably from the

cuatro paredes desnuda se abriga el amor maternal y el heroísmo del trabajo." Ponce, "La importancia del folklorismo musical," *Plural: revista cultural de Excelsior* 17, No 196 (Enero 1988): 30.

⁸⁹ "La canción mexicana sufría el desdén de nuestros más prestigiados compositores y escondíase como chicuela avergonzada, ocultando su origen plebeyo y su desnudez lírica ante las miradas de una sociedad que sólo acogía en sus salones la música de procedencia extranjera o las composiciones mexicanas con títulos en francés." Manuel M. Ponce, "El folk-lore musical mexicano: Lo que se ha hecho. Lo que puede hacerse," *Revista Nacional de Mexico* 1, No. 5 (15 September 1919): 5.

⁹⁰ Ponce, "El folk-lore mexicano," 7.

countryside in the mid-twentieth century—proposed by Vicente T. Mendoza through his research on classification of Mexican songs.⁹¹ The authorship of this version is attributed to Antonio Zúñiga (1835-1885). In the second example, I share Ponce’s refined arrangement for voice and piano (see Figure 6) of the same tune, first published between 1912-1913.

When comparing both scores, we can observe Ponce made substantial modifications in his arrangement, assuming that his source material bears some resemblance to the version collected by Mendoza. The most obvious one is the setting of the text as he exchanges some of the original words for others of more “poetic” character. I consider this to be an effort to elevate the casual language used by popular music composers. Additionally, Ponce modifies the rhythmic value of many notes, I believe this is because they imitate more naturally the speech patterns of the Spanish language and allow for an accurate setting of accented syllables with the strong beats of the measure. Thus, this set up includes longer note values that allow the singer to use a lyrical singing style. The Mexican composer also modifies the original melody, this happens frequently when there are “repeated notes” in the original folk tune. I infer he exchanged these notes for others more creative that produce bigger intervals and are rather attractive to the operatic voice. In his efforts to modernize the tune, he also inserts chromatic turns that add Romantic flavor (F# on anacrusis to first measure; then again on m. 4), much like the European music accepted at the time in Mexican concert halls. Lastly, the piano accompaniment, although it supports the voice by doubling the melodic line one hundred percent of the time, it incorporates polyphony. Ponce added up to four independent

⁹¹ Vicente T. Mendoza, *La canción mexicana: Ensayo de clasificación y antología* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982): 126.

counterpoint lines (in some measures), giving the song a sophisticated harmonic layer.

Below, I compare both texts to emphasize the changes Ponce made to the original verses.

Original folk song by Antonio Zúñiga:	Arrangement by Manuel M. Ponce:
Marchita el alma, muerto el sentimiento, mustia la faz, herido el corazón. Vagando errante por camino incierto con la esperanza de alcanzar su amor.	Marchita el alma, triste el pensamiento, mustia la faz y herido el corazón; atravesando la existencia mísera sin esperanza, de alcanzar su amor.
Yo quise hablarle y decirle mucho, mucho al intentarlo mi labio enmudeció nada le dije porque nada pude pues era de otro ya su ingrato corazón.	Yo quise hablarle y decirle mucho, mucho, pero al intentarlo mi labio enmudeció; nada le dije, porque nada pude, pues era de otro ya su corazón.



Figure 5: “Marchita el alma” original folk tune and words by Antonio Zúñiga.⁹²

⁹² Vicente T. Mendoza, *La canción mexicana: Ensayo de clasificación y antología* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982): 126.

Marchita el alma

Manuel M. Ponce

Moderato

espressivo

Canto

p

Mar-chi-ta, el al-ma, tris-te, el pen-sa-mien-to, mus-tia

Piano

p

espressivo

faz y he-ri-do, el co-ra-zón, a-tra-ve-san-do la e-xis-ten-cia

cresc.

cresc.

f *rall.* *stretto*

mi-se-ra sin es-pe-ran-za, sin es-pe-ran-za de al-can-zar su a-

f *rall.* *stretto*

1. mor. Mar-chi-ta, el mor. Yo qui-se ha-blar-le y de-cir-le mu-cho,

2.

mu-cho, pe-ro al in-ten-tar-lo mi la-bio, en mu-de-ció; na-da le

rall. *a tempo*

rall. *a tempo*

di-je por-que na-da pu-de, pues e-ra de, o-tro, pues e-ra

cresc. *cresc.*

f

stretto *p* 1. *stretto* *p* 2. **Fine**

de o-tro ya su co-ra-zón. Yo qui-se ha-zón.

pp **Fine**

Figure 6: “Marchita el alma” Ponce’s arrangement for voice and piano. ⁹³

Yellow shows modified text; orange shows modified rhythms; green shows modified pitches, and purple contrapuntal accompaniment.

⁹³ The music excerpts presented in this dissertation were used with exclusive consent from the Escuela Nacional de Música (ahora Facultad de Música) de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, authors of the publication *Doce canciones mexicanas*, edited by the Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce. Manuel M. Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, Edited by Paolo Mello, (Mexico, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008): 44.

Another great example is the folk tune of “Cuiden su vida.” The folk version displayed in Figure 7 is the one proposed by the collecting efforts of Vicente T. Mendoza. However, there is no information on the authorship of the original folk tune. Although Manuel M. Ponce made fewer adjustments to the original melody, we can identify most of his modifications are to text, note value, time signature and piano accompaniment. The text of “Cuiden su vida” underwent a big transformation under Ponce’s penmanship, to the extent of changing the order of the verses and adding his own text to the first three lines. See Figures 7 and 8 for comparison.

M
 ¿De qué se al-mi-ran de un hombr'e-na-mo-ra-do,
 de qué se al-mi-ran de que be-ba vi-no?
 N
 si be-bo vi-no es por e-sa mu-jer—
 n
 ¡Qué les im-por-ta—! ¡Cuiden su vi-da—, de-jen la mí-a pa-de-cer.
 0
 Ven-go bo-rra-cho— sí, pe-ro les cum—pla,
 0
 a nai-den le ha-blo u-na ma-la pa-la—bra;
 N'
 ven-go bo-rra-cho y a nai-den le im-por-ta na—da.
 n
 ¡Qué les im-por-ta—! ¡Cuiden su vi-da—, de-jen la mí-a pa-de-cer.

Figure 7: "Cuiden su vida" original folk melody.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Mendoza, *La canción mexicana*, 492.

Moderato espressivo

27

95

Yellow shows modified text; orange shows modified rhythms; green shows modified pitches, and purple shows text painting in accompaniment.

⁹⁵ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, edited by Paolo Mello, (Mexico, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008): 32.

The elaborated piano accompaniment Ponce writes for this folk tune is his most virtuosic in the whole collection. The way it is written showcases the piano as a solo instrument with thick harmonies and Liszt-like virtuosic writing, especially during the piano interlude (see Figure 9). Ponce also uses text painting techniques to create a dramatic role for the piano part. An example of this is the desperation mood created by the trills on the piano part m. 20-24; and the *acciaccatura* on the word “enamorado” (being in love) m. 21-22.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Cuiden su vida" by Manuel Ponce. It consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 24-36) shows the Canto (Vocal) and Piano parts. The vocal line has lyrics "de - cer". The piano accompaniment is marked *mf* and features thick, blocky chords and trills. The second system (measures 37-40) continues the piano part with dynamic markings *cresc.*, *f*, *cresc. sempre e accel.*, and *ff*. The third system (measures 41-44) shows the vocal part with lyrics "Si be - bo" and "a tempo", and the piano part with dynamic markings *dim. e rall.* and *p*. The score is written in a key with three flats and a common time signature.

Figure 9: Piano interlude written by Ponce for “Cuiden su vida.”⁹⁶

Although he wrote this interlude for the piano solo version of the song, it has been included in the new edition of *Doce canciones mexicanas* as an alternative interlude and can be inserted before the last “A.”

⁹⁶ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 35.

Once more, in his efforts to dignify popular music, Ponce felt the need to edit the original text. In this particular example, there are a few words misspelled (*Italic*) when compared to formal Spanish; this is probably the product of the texts being created by the humble town rhapsodists. In addition, Ponce softens the “drinking” subject by adding poetic figures that romanticize the whole first verse and completely changes the first three lines (highlighted). Similarly, he moves the same three lines of the original text to the second verse.

“Cuiden su vida” Original Folk Song Text	“Cuiden su vida” Ponce’s Arrangement
<p>¿De qué se <i>almiran</i> de un hombre enamorado, De qué se <i>almiran</i> de que beba vino? Si bebo vino es por esa mujer. ¡Qué les importa! Cuiden su vida, dejen la mía padecer. Vengo borracho, sí, pero les cumplo, A <i>naiden</i> le hable una mala palabra; Vengo borracho y a <i>naiden</i> le importa nada. Qué les importa! Cuiden su vida, dejen la mía padecer.</p>	<p>Llevo en el alma embriagadora La dulce mezcla de pena y placer. Si bebo vino es por eso mujer; Nada les importa, cuiden su vida, dejen la mía padecer. De qué se admiran de un hombre enamorado, De qué se admiran de que beba vino Si bebo vino es por eso mujer; Nada les importa, cuiden su vida, dejen la mía padecer.</p>

4.2 Ponce’s Song Arrangements versus Original Songs

Before we explore this collection more in depth, I would like to designate the original songs composed by him (music and text by Ponce or poetry written by friends) from song arrangements inspired by folk tunes. Through research obtained by the Ponce Editorial Project, it is confirmed that three songs are originals, one is unclear (“Cerca de mi”) of the composer—though experts consider it a Ponce original due to its stylistic similarities with other original songs, and eight are folk tune arrangements by Ponce.⁹⁷

However, the bibliographic work of Jorge Barrón sheds light on a 1925 article “Ni

⁹⁷ *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano: Comentarios generales y semblanza analítica*, Edited by Paolo Mello, (Mexico, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008).

plagios, ni profanación” (No Plagiarism, nor Profanation) published in the Mexican newspaper *El Universal*, where Ponce includes a list of his original songs in response to claims that he did not produce any completely original vocal works. Amongst his original songs he mentions four titles included in this collection: “¡Adiós, mi bien!,” “Cerca de mí,” “Por ti mujer” and “Por ti mi corazón.”⁹⁸ Conclusively, the *Doce canciones mexicanas* collection includes seven folk song arrangements by Ponce in art music style and five original art songs.

Table 1: Ponce's original songs vs. folk song arrangements

Folk Song Arrangements	Original Songs*
“Ah, qué bonito...”	“¡Adiós, mi bien!”
“A la orilla de un palmar”	“Cerca de mí”
“A tus amigos...”	“Dolores hay”
“Cuiden su vida”	“Por ti mi corazón”
“El olvido”	“Por ti mujer”
“La pajarera”	
“Marchita el alma”	

4.3 Classification by Origin

Regarding his song’s origins, Ponce stated: “My songs have been inspired truly by popular sources. Those stylizations of mine had its origin at fairs from the epoch, in the pueblo’s *cantos* that we hear during cockfights and game matches from the parties at little pueblos and ranches. Those same cantos, transcribed in paper, served as inspiration for special harmonizations to produce my songs.”¹¹

In the article “El folk-lore Musical Mexicano: Lo que se ha hecho. Lo que puede hacerse,”⁹⁹ Ponce described his process of transforming popular music into art music. The composer speaks

⁹⁸ Manuel M. Ponce, “Ni plagios, ni profanación,” *El Universal* (15 May 1925).

⁹⁹ Ponce, “El folk-lore mexicano,” 6.

about the art of researching, collecting, and cataloguing these folk tunes because not all were worthy of “stylizations.” It was necessary to classify these songs by rhythms, meter, and mood or modality of each region. In this publication, he proclaims three different groups as related to song origin:

1. *Cantos del norte (Songs from the North)*: The composer states these compositions of quick and decided rhythms express the audacious nature of the frontiersmen. He provides examples of these songs: “La Valentina,” “La Adelita,” and “Trigueña Hermosa.”
2. *Melodías lánguidas del Bajío (Languid melodies of the Southern Plateau)*: includes the states of Aguascalientes, Jalisco, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Querétaro, and Michoacán. The composer shares these compositions express faithfully the melancholy of the central provinces. Representations of these songs include: “Marchita el Alma,” “Adiós, mi bien,” and “Por ti mi corazón.”
3. *Canciones Costeñas (Coastal Songs)*: these songs show us the voluptuousness or seductiveness of the tropical lands. For instance, “A la orilla de un palmar” and “La Costeña” exhibit these traits.

In Table 2, I categorize the songs within the origin groups present in Ponce’s collection *Doce canciones mexicanas*. We can gather from the following chart that languid melodies of the southern plateau are the most popular amongst the twelve songs in this collection. Additionally, we can infer Ponce’s original songs belong in this group since the composer was born and raised in the geographical area of Aguascalientes. Furthermore, his original songs embody the melancholy characteristic of this group. However, “La Pajarera” is a song that does not fit any of the categories proposed by Ponce, as this is a song possibly originated in Mexico City or the area of Central Mexico (according to Vicente T. Mendoza). In addition, I provide the first verse of the song “A la orilla de un palmar” to further exemplify the origin groups proposed by Ponce, in this case the melody is a coastal song.

Table 2: Classification of songs by origin

1. Songs from the North	2. Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau	3. Canciones Costeñas	4. Central Mexico
A tus amigos...	¡Adiós, mi bien!* Ah, qué bonito... Cerca de mí* Cuiden su vida Dolores hay* El olvido Marchita el alma Por ti mi corazón* Por ti mujer*	A la orilla de un palmar	La Pajarera*

A la orilla de un palmar – Spanish Text	At the palm grove shore – English Translation
A la orilla de un palmar yo vi una joven bella, su boquita de coral, sus ojitos dos estrellas. Al pasar le pregunté que quien estaba con ella y me respondió llorando: sola vivo en el palmar.	At the palm grove shore I saw a beautiful young lady, her coral little mouth, her eyes like two stars. As she passed by I asked who was with her and she answered me crying: I live alone in the palm grove

4.4 Classification by Music Characteristics

As discussed in the essay translated in the previous chapter, Ponce classified Mexican songs by their musical characteristics. According to him, there are three types of Mexican songs:

1. The song with ample and slow melody.
2. The song with rapid movement (usually in compound meter 6/8).
3. The song in triple meter and of moderate tempo (possesses the air of a slow *mazurka*).

Table 3 categorizes all the songs in this collection by their music characteristics. We can conclude from this chart that the most popular type of song is a Group 1 type, which is the model Ponce based a vast number of his original compositions on. Figures 10 to 12 demonstrate

the musical characteristics of each group proposed by Ponce.

Table 3: Classification of songs by music characteristics

1. Song with Ample and Slow Melody	2. Song with Rapid Movement	3. Song in Triple Meter and of Moderate Tempo
¡Adiós, mi bien!* A la orilla de un palmar Cerca de mí* Cuiden su vida Dolores hay* El olvido Marchita el alma Por ti mujer*	A tus amigos... La pajarera	Ah, qué bonito... Por ti mi corazón*

¡Adiós, mi bien!
Canción Mexicana

Manuel M. Ponce

Moderato

p espressivo

Canto

Piano

¡A-diós mi bien, a-diós!

Me voy muy le-jos de tí. Lle-vo en mi co-ra-zón

la he-ri-da de un cruel do-lor. Ol-vi-da-te de mí, ol-vi-da

animando *cresc.*

cresc.

mi pa-sión. — A-diós mi úl-ti-ma i-lu-sión, a-diós mi a-mor. — A-diós mi

Ya no ful-gu-ra, el sol en mi sen-de-ro sin fin; en mi de-so-la-ción

no ha-brá ya ro-sas de a-bril. — Ol-vi-da mi pa-sión, ol-vi-da-te de mí. —

¡A-diós mi úl-ti-ma i-lu-sión, a-diós mi a-mor!

Figure 10: “Adiós, mi bien” an original composition by Ponce exemplifying Group 1 (see Table 3).¹⁰⁰

In this group, the melody is extensive or large, meaning the melodic material during the exposition (section “A”) is all new, giving the effect of a long continuous melody.

¹⁰⁰ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 22.

Canción muy popular en el
Estado de Coahuila.

A tus amigos... LXVI

Arreglo de Manuel M. Ponce

Allegretto espressivo

Canto

A tus a - mi - gos los has de po - ner de a .

Piano

cuer - do que fuis - te mí - a y yo due - ño de tu a - mor.

1. A tus a - Pe - ro an - da, ton - ta, no su - pis - te lo que hi -

2.

Figure 11: "A tus amigos..." is an arrangement by Ponce, exemplifying Group 2 (see Table 3).¹⁰¹

This excerpt exemplifies the song with rapid movement (usually in compound meter 6/8). The composer indicates tempo *allegretto espressivo*, giving the song a dramatic and animated feeling. Additionally, the consistent eighth note rhythmic patterns give the melody a sense of speedy motion.

¹⁰¹ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 28.

Por tí mi corazón...
(original)

Palabras de Luis G. Urbina
Música de Manuel M. Ponce

Lentamente

Canto

Piano

p

p espressivo

rubato

Por tí mi co-ra-zón fue un ta - lis-mán di - vi - no.

Por tí fue la i - lu-sión un as - tro en mi des - ti - no.

Por tí fue mi pa-sión en un ár - bol un tri - no que bro - ta ya.

Figure 12: “Por tí mi corazón...” an original song by Ponce¹⁰² exemplifying Group 3 (see Table 3).
The song is in triple meter and of moderate tempo that possesses the air of a slow mazurka.

¹⁰² Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 46.

4.5 Classification by Subject

According to Ponce, amongst the topics included in the popular song, one can frequently find (amongst others) love, suffering, jealousy, drunkenness, and occasionally religious idealism. Table 4 exhibits a designation of the songs by subject. The results displayed in this chart clearly depict the most popular song theme in this collection is “suffering.” As discussed, Ponce likely saw in this the perfect manifestation of the soul of a grieving nation. Since “La pajarera” contains themes about spring and nature, not found in any category proposed by Ponce, I created a special grouping for this song.

Table 4: Classification of songs by subject

Love	Suffering	Jealousy	Drunkenness	Nature*
A la orilla de un palmar Cerca de mí*	¡Adiós, mi bien!*	A tus amigos...	Cuiden su vida	La pajarera
	Ah, qué bonito...	Dolores hay*		
	A la orilla de un palmar			
	El olvido			
	Marchita el alma			
	Por ti mi corazón*			
	Por ti mujer*			

What follows are text examples from the subject categories proposed by Ponce.

Love: “Cerca de mí”	
Así, cerca de mí, dame tus ojos, tus ojos que son luz de mi camino. Amarte con pasión fue mi destino; hasta la muerte, si, te he de adorar.	Like that, close to me, give me your eyes, your eyes that illuminate my path. Loving you with passion was my fate; yes, until death do us part, I must adore you.
Suffering: “Marchita el alma”	
Marchita el alma triste el pensamiento, mustia la faz y herido el corazón, atravesando la existencia mísera sin esperanza de alcanzar su amor.	The shriveled soul, the inconsolable thought, the dejected face and pierced heart, penetrate the hopeless, anguished existence hopeless of attaining her/his love.
Jealousy: “Dolores hay”	
Dolores hay que resistir no puedo	There are pains I can no longer endure

Y que el tiempo tal vez irá calmando. Dolores hay que sin cesar me están matando Celos de amores, remordimientos mil.	that time may gradually soothe. There are incessant pains that are killing me, jealous love, a thousand regrets.
Drunkenness: Cuiden su vida	
Llevo en el alma embriagadora la dulce mezcla de pena y placer. Si bebo vino es por esa mujer; nada les importa, cuiden su vida, dejen la mía padecer.	I take in my intoxicated soul the sweet blend of agony and pleasure. If I drink wine it's because of that woman; no one cares, take care of your own life, let mine suffer.

It is noteworthy that many of the songs also share a subtheme of “machismo” ideals.

This is an ancient ideology that—regrettably—has played a role in Mexican culture and portrays a strong masculine pride. We can find examples in the song “Ah, que bonito” such as the phrase:

Mujer ingrata no me pagues con traiciones,
mira que el hombre donde quiera es libre

Ungrateful woman, do not pay me with betrayals
be aware that a man is free wherever he wants.

Another illustration can be found in “A tus amigos”:

A tus amigos los has de poner de acuerdo
que fuiste mía, y yo dueño de tu amor

You should make it known to your friends
That you were mine and I was the owner of your
love.

4.6 Song Form

It is surprising to find a uniform song structure present in song compositions that originated from different parts of the country. These songs conform to a common, almost as if the popular rhapsodists that created them had agreed to do so, perhaps as an aid to improvisation. In his writing, Ponce explained that the melodic phrases of the *canción* are formed by two sections: each section is 8 or 16 measures, contingent upon the time signature. Then, the composer enumerated the standard form of the *canción mexicana* which he studied and used as prototype for his original song compositions. In this section, I provide a visual reference of the structure of the songs according to Ponce. The song form consists of two major

sections (A B) and two subsections within each major section (a-b, c-b), resulting in:

$$A=(a-b) \text{ and } B=(c-b)$$

Lastly, the major section “A” repeats in typical *ritornello* (lower case b) fashion that became a primary characteristic of the *canCIÓN mexicana*. The *ritornello* appears again as part of the major “B” section, concluding in:

$$\text{Form 1: } \parallel :A=(a-b): \parallel B=(c-b) \parallel$$

Figure 13 is an example of a composition that possesses Form 1.

¡Adiós, mi bien!
Canción Mexicana

Manuel M. Ponce

Moderato

Canto

p *espressivo*

¡A-diós mi bien, a-diós!

a

Me voy muy le-jos de ti. Lle-vo en mi co-ra-zón

la he-ri-da de un cruel do-lor. Ol-vi-da-te de mí, ol-vi-da

b

animando *cresc.*

f *rit.*

mi pa-sión. A-diós mi úl-ti-ma, i-lu-sión, a-diós mi a-mor. A-diós mi

B

espress.

Ya no ful-gu-ra, el sol en mi sen-de-ro sin fin; en mi de-so-la-ción

C

cresc.

no ha-brá ya ro-sas de a-bril. Ol-vi-da mi pa-sión, ol-vi-da-te de mí.

b

f *P*

¡A-diós mi úl-ti-ma, i-lu-sión, a-diós mi a-mor!

Figure 13: “Adiós, mi bien” an original song by Ponce is an example of Form 1= A(ab) B(cb)¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 22.

Ponce does not mention additional song forms; however, there are two more present in *Doce canciones mexicanas* that, although they are similar, do not fit the standard form the composer references. The forms look like this:

Form 2: $\parallel:A=(a-a'):\parallel \parallel:B=(b-a'):\parallel$

In Form number 2, the section a' is related to a albeit with slight modifications.

Cuiden su vida

Manuel M. Ponce

Moderato espressivo

Canto

do-ra y dul-ce mez-cla de pe-na y pla-cer Si be-bo vi - no es por ti, oh mu - jer: na-da les im-

por - ta, cui-den su vi-da, de-jen la mí-a pa-de - cer. De qué se ad-

mi - ran de, un hom-bre, e-na-mo - ra - do, de qué se ad-

mi - ran de que be-ba vi - no. Si be-bo vi - no, es por e - sa mu-

jer: na-da les im-por - ta, cui-den su vi-da, de-jen la mí-a pa-de -

cer.

Figure 14: “Cuiden su vida” an arrangement by Ponce¹⁰⁴ is an example of Song Form 2= aa’ba’.

Here, the beginning of the [a’] section is related to [a], observe the notes in dark blue.

¹⁰⁴ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 32.

In Form 3, the material from the “A” section repeats and is immediately succeeded by a new section “B.” “A” then functions as a *ritornello*.

Form 3: ||: A :|| ||: B-A :||

Canción muy popular en el Estado de Coahuila. A tus amigos... LXVI Arreglo de Manuel M. Ponce

Allegretto espressivo

Canto

A

p

A tus a - mi - gos los has de po - ner de_a .

cuer-do que fuis-te mí-a _____ y yo due-ño de tu_a - mor. _____

1. 2. **B**

A tus a - Pe-ro an - da, ton-ta, no su - pis - te lo que hi -

cis - te, _____ de - jar - me_a mí _____ que soy hom - bre_y na - da

A

pier-do. _____ A tus a - mi - gos los has de po - ner de_a - cuer-do que fuis - te

poco rit. *a tempo*

mí-a _____ y yo due-ño de tu_a - mor. _____

Figure 15: “A tus amigos...” an arrangement by Ponce.¹⁰⁵

This song is an example of Song 3= aba.

¹⁰⁵ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 28.

Table 5 provide a chart to assist with form classifications of Ponce’s “Twelve Songs” from this collection. We can ascertain from Table 5 that the most prevalent song form in this collection is Form 2. Although Ponce does not mention this form in his writings, it does not mean Ponce’s statement is inaccurate; it simply means Form 2 is the most common form among the collection of twelve *canciones*. Further research is needed with reference to the art songs not included in this edition.

Table 5: Classification of songs by their song form

Form 1	Form 2	Form 3
¡Adiós, mi bien! El olvido La pajarera	Ah, qué bonito... A la orilla de un palmar Cerde de mí* Cuiden su vida Dolores hay...* Marchita el alma Por ti mi corazón* Por ti mujer*	A tus amigos...

4.7 Piano Introductions

To complement the previous section of song classifications, I would like to elaborate upon the fact that some songs have a piano introduction. Typically, four measures in duration, it announces the opening notes of the main melody. Only one song in this collection has an introduction in which the piano does not introduce a short version of the melody but instead provides a rhythmic pattern with arpeggiated notes, simulating the plucked notes from a guitar. Conversely, not all songs have an introduction; many begin with an anacrusis. See Figure 16 for an example. Table 6 organizes the songs by type of introduction.

Cerca de mí
LIV

Manuel M. Ponce

Andante espressivo

Canto

Piano

p

A - sí, cer-ca de

p

p

6

mí, da-me tus o - jos, — tus o - jos que son luz en mi ca - mi - no. —

6

Figure 16: “Cerca de mí” is an original song by Ponce that has a four-measure introduction that showcases the first six notes of the main tune.¹⁰⁶

Table 6: Song with and without piano introduction

Piano Intro with Melody	Piano Intro with Guitar Like Accompaniment	No Intro, Pickup Note Entrance
¡Adiós, mi bien! A la orilla de un palmar Cerca de mí Cuiden su vida El olvido La pajarrera	A tus amigos	Ah, qué bonito... Dolores hay Marchita el alma Por ti mi corazón... Por ti mujer

¹⁰⁶ Ponce, *Doce canciones mexicanas obras para canto y piano*, 30.

4.8 *Doce canciones mexicanas*, Art Songs or Popular Songs?

It is no secret that Ponce's compositions received criticism since their inception. The Mexican composer was vocal about this regrettable fact in numerous writings, and this was further evidenced by his 1913 lecture "La música mexicana." Ponce's lecture was an earnest attempt to explain his desired outcomes in arranging vernacular songs and using them as prototypes for his own compositions. Criticism arose from music aristocrats who believed that Ponce's arrangements of folk tunes heard at fairs and humble gatherings were inappropriate and unworthy of the recital hall. Influenced by the political factors examined in chapter 2, Mexican society before the revolution was largely not supportive of music that did not contain European influences and foreign titles. Folk song arrangements with Spanish texts and local flavors seemed incomparable to the Italian romanzas and arias popular at the time. Ponce struggled to convince the Mexican music elite these songs could be recoated with new harmonic sounds that would make them suitable concert repertoire. Another issue Ponce encountered was that as a result of his strict adherence to the stylistic model of the *canción*, his own original compositions were hard to distinguish from the arrangements he had written. Consequently, his music did not garner the diffusion and promotion it deserved in Mexico and even less so in other countries. This generated a faulty categorization of Ponce's vocal compositions as popular music repertoire despite the composer's efforts to dignify them. Following Ponce's death, his vocal music disappeared from the Mexican musical landscape for decades until the recent Editorial Project that has inspired performances of his *canciones* throughout Mexico. Although this music is being performed more regularly in Ponce's native

land, the controversial question remains as to whether the *canciones* qualify as art music or popular songs.

In closing this chapter, I present singers with three assertions that certify Ponce's vocal compositions as art songs. In the *New Grove Dictionary* article on "Song," Geoffrey Chew summarizes existing scholarly debate and consensus on the differences between serious and popular song in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He notes that one of the main differences is the function of the piano accompaniment. If the piano accompaniment is written down, then it distinguishes that serious song from its popular counterpart. The reason for this is that popular song was generally satisfied with simple harmonic accompaniment and was not written. Conversely, a piano accompaniment was often composed to fit in a role almost equivalent to the voice. This was influenced by the technological advances made to the piano during the nineteenth century that allowed for the production of resonant, legato, and cantabile lines.¹⁰⁷ The original songs were conceived with an intentional collaboration between voice and piano as demonstrated through his composition of both parts simultaneously. Although his folk song arrangements incorporated an existing original folk melody, Ponce added a tangible harmonized piano part that accompanies the solo line.

Chew suggests another difference between serious and popular song: the composer's approach to text declamation. The popular repertory frequently incorporated simplistic melodic settings that repeated during all stanzas of the text, while serious composers aimed to illustrate the correct and expressive declamation of the text through its coordination with the melodic

¹⁰⁷ Geoffrey Chew, Thomas J. Mathiesen, Thomas B. Payne, and David Fallows, "Song," *Grove Music Online* (20 January 2001): 16-17.

line.¹⁰⁸ In analyzing, Ponce's careful text setting in this chapter, I have found that the composer frequently changed rhythmic patterns in the music to align fluidity and correct inflection of the language with the ictus of the melodic line.

It is also important to understand the composer's goals regarding the fusion of vernacular and serious styles. Fortunately, Ponce was a prolific author, and he recorded his most important thoughts about music in his publications. Because of this, we know of his aspirations to dignify and elevate the vernacular music of the pueblo to European standards in spite of disapproval from colleagues and music critics. He also wished for this outcome so Mexican society would finally accept vernacular music as its new true musical identity. The product of his efforts resulted in the early manifestation of romantic art song.

Lastly, Ponce's later compositions provide valuable information about his vision, and they underscore his early efforts to dignify vernacular music. Ponce's Modern Period (1925-1948) produced compositional achievements in vocal music that were unparalleled. He composed highly sophisticated art songs in several languages (Spanish, German, French, Italian and English) containing poetry written by established lyricists that demanded mastery of the piano. Ponce's piano accompaniments were now on equal footing with his vocal parts. These compositions included a heavy European influence but did not include nationalistic traits. In the end, Ponce's legacy was similar—though on a smaller scale—to the trajectory of the greatest German composers such as Brahms, Schubert and Mendelssohn, whom he mentioned in

¹⁰⁸ Geoffrey Chew, Thomas J. Mathiesen, Thomas B. Payne, and David Fallows, "Song," *Grove Music Online* (20 January 2001): 16-17.

articles as his archetype for nationalistic and compositional ideals.¹⁰⁹

For these reasons, I charge singers to reconsider the historic standard categorizations bestowed upon Ponce's earlier vocal compositions and instead promote their entry into the academic voice curriculum canon and concert hall.

¹⁰⁹ Gustavo E. Campa, "La conferencia de Manuel M. Ponce sobre la música popular mexicana," *Gaceta Musical* 10 (1 January, 1 February 1914); Manuel M. Ponce, *Escritos y composiciones musicales*, Edited by Rubén M. Campos. (Mexico D.F.: Selección de Buenos Autores Antiguos y Modernos, 1917): 26; "El folk-lore musical mexicano: Lo que se ha hecho. Lo que puede hacerse." *Revista Nacional de Mexico* 1, No. 5 (15 September 1919): 29.

CHAPTER 5

DOCE CANCIONES MEXICANAS

5.1 Introduction to the Collection

Doce canciones mexicanas is a collection published in 2008 by the School of Music of the National Autonomous University of Mexico through the *Editorial Project Manuel M. Ponce*. This compilation of twelve songs composed by Manuel M. Ponce was assembled by the group of reviewers from the ongoing editorial project. The primary goal was to include some of his renowned vocal works along with additional compositions that embody his essence and writing style. This group of twelve pieces was not originally compiled as a collection since Ponce composed them individually, between 1905 to 1917, and consequently were printed in different editions. In fact, one of the songs “Ah que bonito” was never published during Ponce’s lifetime. Moreover, this collection includes five original art songs and seven folk song arrangements in art song style. Lastly, one of the major modifications included in this edition is the added staff for the individual vocal line. Ponce did not write a separate vocal part in his manuscripts because he intended for the pieces to be performed as both, piano solo pieces and solo voice with piano. In the latter, the voice would simply follow the right hand’s melody from the piano part and sing the added text included in the score.

5.2 Historically Informed Performance Practices for Singers

Through the study of Ponce’s prose, we recognize that in arranging these folk melodies his objective was to create compositions worthy of the concert hall. He sought to elevate these folk tunes by creating piano accompaniments that support the singer thus giving the vocal part a lyrical quality. According to Ponce, Italian vocal music had a significant influence on the

canción mexicana. Therefore, it is safe to say that some of the Romantic qualities of the operatic repertoire also transfer to the *canción*. According to Ponce expert, Paolo Mello, vocal *vibrato*, tasteful *portamento*, and moderate *rubato* are expressive tools welcome in the style of Ponce's Romantic Art Songs. These practices are exhibited in numerous recordings of Ponce's instrumental compositions. Additionally, one of the main characteristics mentioned by Ponce scholars about his vocal compositions is the amplitude or width of the singing range used. It encompasses low notes and considerably higher pitches in a lyrical fashion. Therefore, the singer will be successful in achieving free and musical vocalism if Italian bel canto singing traditions are applied upon approaching this repertoire.

The melodic material is driven by the text and creates a syllabic quality. The performer should observe this vocally as Ponce highlights speech tendencies and syllabic emphasis of the Spanish language. He accomplishes this by composing longer note durations for those that coincide with stressed syllables in each word. This trait is key for the performer to achieve lyrical clarity. However, an intentional effort to maintain a legato line should be made so the melody does not lose its connected nature.

Regarding breath control, the *canción mexicana* often possesses a slow lyrical line that requires complete control of the singer's breath support. The artist should sing each musical phrase on one breath if possible. Ponce indicates the end of each phrase by incorporating "music rests" that function as breath marks for the singer. These rest notations are also important because they indicate the end of the literary idea. Therefore, no additional breaths should interrupt the course and flow of the prose. Instead, the singer should observe punctuation marks and music rests for potential breaths.

For dynamics, the singer should observe the melodic contour of each phrase to highlight the climax of each song. Ponce demonstrates the dramatic essence of each phrase by notating a gradual *crescendo* and ascent that climaxes with beautifully high sustained notes that immediately descend in both pitch and volume. This results in a feeling of instability. Additionally, the composer provides ample text painting opportunities for text painting in which the singer can expressively integrate an array of vocal colors and dynamic contrasts. The word-for-word translations included will prove most helpful in this practice.

Character portrayal should be guided by an examination of the word-for-word and poetic translations. In doing so, the performer can delve into feelings of sadness, longing, hopelessness, suffering, jealousy, love, drunkenness, and mischievousness. Because of this, the singer could experiment with contrasting vocal colors and timbre qualities that reflect the emotional state of the poetry.

About diction, the singer should aim towards purity of vowels with particular attention placed on unstressed syllables. There should be no diphthongs when pronouncing the sounds [ɛ], and [ɔ]. The vowels [a] and [ɛ] should have a bright quality, as opposed to their darker counterparts used in the English language. Because the expressivity of the Spanish language depends solely on vowel sounds, long sustained vowels should be used for lyrical clarity. The singer should avoid emphasizing consonant sounds. There are, however, three groups of consonant sounds that must be carefully inspected because they are typically mispronounced by non-native Spanish speakers.

- *The “y” and the “ll” (they share the same sound).* The standard pronunciation of Mexican Spanish necessitates the phonetic symbol [dʒ] like in the English word “jeans.”

Therefore, the words “yo” or “lluvia” should be pronounced [dʒo] and [ˈdʒuvja]. This clear and standard pronunciation can be heard in central Mexico, as well as in television, news outlets, media events, movies, theatrical plays, and speeches. This is not the case in Spain, however, where the consonants “y” and “ll” are pronounced like a glide [j].

- *The “b” and the “v” (also share the same sound).* This can be especially confusing for non-native speakers because most other languages have different sounds for these two consonants but, in Spanish, they sound the same despite their different spelling. There are, however, two different sounds for “b”: [b] strong voiced, [β] softer unvoiced. When a “b” consonant is used at the beginning of any phrase or after “m” or “n” it receives the hard [b] pronunciation. For example, in the phrase “Buenos dias a todos” the “b” becomes a hard [b]; in the word “bomba,” both “bs” become hard. On the other hand, the softer unvoiced [β] is used in any other situations when “b” is not at the beginning of the phrase, but rather in the middle. For example, in the phrase “ella es muy bonita” the “b” would become a soft [β]. The pronunciation of the softer [β] is close to the regular “b” except the lips do not close; it is almost like a relaxed, lazy, unexploded, semi-open version of “b.” Lastly, the singer should strive for forward articulation and the non-aspiration of consonants, especially “p, t, k.”

- *The consonant “d” has a slightly different pronunciation than the one in English.* In Spanish, the tongue comes in contact with the upper teeth to produce a voiced “d” sound, much like in the English word “thee.” The IPA symbol for this sound is [ð].

Lastly, when two words in Spanish end and start with a vowel; these words combine to continue the flow of the phrase. This happens in Italian as well and we call them “phrasal diphthongs.” For example, the words “mi amor” would be pronounced [mja'mɔɾ], they combine

or connect the ending and beginning vowel sounds of both words. IPA has been provided in this document as a guide to help the singer achieve expressive vocalism.

The piano role in Ponce's songs is more significant than previously considered by his contemporaries. The composer often incorporates motivic figures of the main melody into the piano. Accordingly, the pianist should identify and highlight these *leitmotifs*. At times, they transpire as an echo to the vocal line, as if to corroborate the voice's statement. Additionally, the pianist is responsible for the song's flow. Ponce composes the accompaniment with forward motion to suggest the melodic material is being passed from the vocal line to the piano part. Undoubtedly, the word-for-word textual translation will aid the pianist in finding text painting moments when the piano portrays a small character within the storyline for dramatic purposes. Finally, the pianist should familiarize themselves with the text inflection contained within the melodic line. This will result in a unified tone with the singer in *colla voce* occurrences.

5.3 Song Information, Pedagogical Suggestions, English Translations and IPA

5.3.1 "¡Adiós, mi bien!"

- Text: Manuel M. Ponce
- Original Music: Manuel M. Ponce
- Melody Origin: Zacatecas
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: A. Wagner y Levien, México.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: F Major
- Range: C4-F5

- Time signature: 2/4
- Tempo: Moderato
- Subject/mood: farewell, suffering, longing
- Song Form: A(a-b) B(c-b)
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: This song could be appropriate for the study of the middle range and the *coperto* technique as its tessitura sits on the staff. Use of chest voice is encouraged for the notes located below the staff. In order to achieve an efficient legato line, it is advised to counteract the uneven nature of the melodic line by allowing each vowel sound a longer phonation period; thus, connecting words almost as if vocalizing from vowel to vowel, giving consonants a smaller role. There are two words that possess the [ɔ] Spanish diphthong, “adiós” and “pasión.” In some cases, these two diphthongs appear in a higher tessitura (See example, m. 15 and 16) making fullness of tone and intonation tricky for the female voice on the “i” vowel sound at that range. Vowel modification is suggested by dropping the jaw and merging to a more “open” vowel version, such as [ɔ]. Additionally, the singer should aim to arrive to the [ɔ] as quickly as possible.



¡Adiós, mi bien, adiós!
 [a'ðjɔz mi bjɛn a'djɔs]
 Goodbye my dearest, goodbye!

Me voy muy lejos de ti.
 [mɛ vɔj muj 'lɛ.xɔz dɛ ti]
 I go very far of you
(I leave far away from you,)

Llevo en mi corazón
 ['dʒɛ.βɔɛn mi kɔ.ra'sɔn]
 I-take in my heart
(I carry in my heart)

la herida de un cruel dolor.
 [la ɛ'ri.ða dɛ un krwɛl dɔ'lɔr]
 the wound of a cruel pain.
(the scar of a vicious pain.)

Olvídate de mi, olvida mi pasión.
 [ɔ'l'βi.ða.tɛ ðɛ mi ɔ'l'βi.ða mi pa'sjɔn]
 You-forget about me You-forget my passion
(Forget about me, forget about my passion)

Adiós mi última ilusión, adiós mi amor.
 [a'ðjɔz mi 'ul.ti.ma i.lu'sjɔn a'ðjɔz mja'mɔr]
 Goodbye my final dream, goodbye my love.

Ya no fulgura el sol
 [dʒa no ful'gu.ra ɛl sɔl]
 By-now no it-glows the sun
(The sun has ceased to glow)

en mi sendero sin fin;
 [ɛn mi sɛn'ðɛ.ɾɔ sin fin]
 in my path without end
(on my endless journey;)

en mi desolación
 [ɛn mi ðɛ.sɔ.la'sjɔn]
 in my sorrow

no habrá mas rosas de abril.
 [nɔ a'βra maz 'ɾɔ.saz ðɛ a'bril]
 no will-have more roses of April
(April roses shall bloom no more.)

5.3.2 “Ah, qué bonito...”

- Text: Anonymous
- Original folk tune: Anonymous
- Melody origin: Unknown
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Between 1907-1915
- First publication: *Doce canciones Mexicanas* (2008), Facultad de Música UNAM Editions.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: F Major
- Range: C4-E5
- Time signature: 3/4
- Tempo: Allegretto
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A'
- Subject/mood: unrequited love, betrayal, longing.
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: This song possesses a tessitura that lies primarily on the lower section of the staff with common leaps to the bottom of the staff and occasional pitches

toward the higher portion of it. Therefore, this song is more suitable for the medium voice such as mezzo-soprano or baritone. The setting of the text coincides metrically with the natural speech patterns of the Spanish language, because Ponce accurately shows the stressed or accented syllables on the down beat of every measure; making this vocal composition perfect for the student who is starting to learn the inflection and flow of the Spanish language. To experience the correct inflection, I suggest feeling this song in one long beat instead of three short ones, much like in 3/8 meter. Observe the following excerpt for an example of correct syllabic stress.



Ah, qué bonito es amar en silencio,
 [a ke β'ni.to.ɛs a'mar.ɛn si'len.sjo]
 Ah what beautiful is to-love in silence
 (Oh, how beautiful it is to love in silence,)

porque en silencio se goza con calma;
 ['pɔr.keɛn si'len.sjo se 'go.sa kɔn 'kal.ma]
 because in silence oneself enjoys with calm
 (because in silence one calmly savors)

Pero más bonita es la dueña de mi alma,
 ['pe.ro maz β'ni.ta.ɛz la 'dwe.ɲa de 'mjal.ma]
 But more beautiful is the (she) owner of my soul
 (but more beautiful is the owner of my soul)

la quiero mucho y no la puedo olvidar.
 [la 'kje.ro 'mu.tʃɔ i kɔ la 'pwe.ðɔ.βi'ðar]
 her I-love much and not her I-can forget
 (I love her mightily and I could never forget her.)

Mujer ingrata no me pagues con traiciones,
 [mu'xer iɲ'gra.ta no me 'pa.ɣes kɔn traj'sjo.nɛs]
 Woman ungrateful not to-me you-pay with betrayals
 (Ungrateful woman, do not repay me with betrayals,)

mira que el hombre donde quiera es libre;
 ['mi.ra k_ɛl 'ɔm.brɛ 'ðɔn.ðɛ 'kʝɛ.ra ɛz 'li.βrɛ]
 you-look that the man where he-wants is free
(understand that a man is free wherever he desires)

el olvidarte se me hace imposible,
 [ɛl ɔl.βi'ðar.tɛ sɛ mɛ 'a.sɛ_ɟm.pɔ'si.βlɛ]
 to forget-you is to-me it-makes impossible
(forgetting you is unfathomable)

te quiero mucho y no te puedo olvidar.
 [tɛ 'kʝɛ.ro 'mu.tʃɔ y ɔɔ tɛ 'pwɛ.ð_ɔl.βi'ðar]
 you I-love much and not you I-can forget
(I love you mightily and I could never forget you.)

5.3.3 “A la orilla de un palmar”

- Text: Anonymous
- Original folk tune: Anonymous
- Melody origin: San Pedro Piedra Gorda, Zacatecas, México.
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Probably between 1905-1910
- First publication: A. Wagner y Levien, México. Copyright 1913.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Coastal Song
- Key: F Major
- Range: C4-D5
- Time signature: 4/4
- Tempo: Andante, molto espressivo
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A'
- Subject/mood: seaside story about a coastal girl.

- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: This song contains the smallest range with the lowest tessitura in this collection, making it suitable for the voice that is more comfortable singing between the bottom and middle of the staff. Since this song is text heavy, I suggest focusing on singing long vowel sounds to achieve an uninterrupted legato line. This song portrays the story of a young, innocent girl that lives alone by the palm grove. To achieve a successful characterization, I advise the singer utilizes a different vocal color when the narrative changes from the storyteller to the “young girl” herself, this happens from m. 9 to 18 (See excerpt below). Lastly the expression “ay” can be sung applying affect.



A la orilla de un palmar
 [a la ɔ'ri.dʒa dɛ un pal'mar]
 At the edge of a palm grove
 (At the palm grove's edge)

yo vi una joven bella,
 [dʒo vi 'u.na 'xɔ.βɛn 'βɛ.dʒa]
 I saw a teen beautiful
 (I saw a beautiful young lady,)

su boquita de coral,
 [su βɔ'ki.ta ðɛ kɔ'ral]
 her little-mouth of coral
 (her tiny coral mouth,)

sus ojitos dos estrellas.

[suz ɔ'xi.tɔz ðɔs es'tɾe.dʒas]

Her eyes two stars

(her eyes like two stars.)

Al pasar le pregunté

[al pa'sar le pre.gun'te]

At-the to-pass to-her I-asked

(As she walked by I asked)

que quién estaba con ella

[ke kʲen ɛs'ta.βa kɔn 'e.dʒa]

that who was with her

(who was with her)

y me respondió llorando:

[i me ɾes.pɔn'dʒo dʒɔ.ran'ðɔ]

and to-me she-answered crying

(crying she responded:)

sola vivo en el palmar.

['sɔ.la 'βi.βɔn el 'pal.mar]

Alone I-live in the palm grove

(I live alone at the palm grove.)

Soy huerfanita, ¡ay!

[soj weɾ.fa'ni.ta aj]

I-am orphan Ah

(Ah, I am an orphan!)

no tengo padre ni madre,

[nɔ 'tɛŋ.ɔɔ 'pa.ðɾe ni 'ma.ðɾe]

no I-have father nor mother

(I have no father nor mother,)

ni un amigo ¡ay!

[nʲun a'mi.ɔɔ aj]

nor a friend ah

(nor a friend, ugh!)

Que me venga a consolar.

[ke me 'βɛŋ.ga kɔn.sɔ'lar]

That to-me he-comes to comfort

(To come comfort me.)

Solita paso la vida

[sɔ'li.ta 'pa.so la 'βi.ða]

Alone I-pass the life

(I spend life alone)

a la orilla del palmar
 [a laɔ'ri.dʒa ðel pal'mar]
 at the edge of-the palm grove
(at the palm grove's edge)

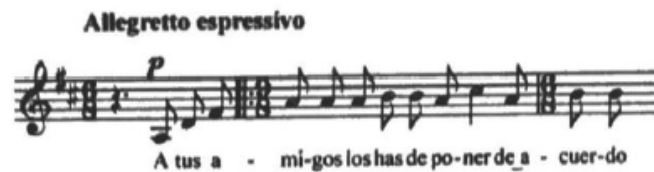
y solita voy y vengo,
 [i so'li.ta βɔj.j 'bɛŋ.ɔɔ]
 and alone I-go and I-come
(and alone I come and go,)

como las olas del mar.
 [kɔ.mo las 'ɔ.laz ðel mar]
 Like the waves of-the ocean.

5.3.4 “A tus amigos...”

- Original folk tune: Anonymous
- Melody origin: Coahuila
- Text: Anonymous
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1924.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Songs from the North
- Key: D Major
- Range: A3-E5
- Time signature: 6/8
- Tempo: Allegretto espressivo, or moderato if thought of in bigger beats.
- Song Form: A-B-A
- Subject/mood: resentment, contempt toward a loved one.

- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: The range of this song is wide and its tessitura sits low on the staff while including two E5s in the B section, making it suitable for middle and low voices. Since the use of the chest voice register is needed to execute the song, the quick rhythms and movement of the song can make the transition between chest and head voice a challenge. Therefore, this piece can be useful for the singer wanting repertoire to help with this transition. An interesting characteristic of this folk tune is that some of the measures are typically sung by holding a fermata over the words “fuiste” (m. 4 and 17) and “dejarme” (m. 12). Although Ponce’s arrangement does not reflect this tradition rhythmically in the setting of the text, I encourage singers to practice the use of the fermata, see example below.



A tus amigos los has de poner de acuerdo
 [a tus a'mi.ɣos los az ðe pɔ'nɐr ðe a'kwɐr.ðɔ]
 To your friends them have-you of to-set of agreement
 (Be certain your friends understand)

que fuiste mía y yo dueño de tu amor.
 [kɛ 'fujs.tɛ mi:a i dʒɔ 'ðwɛ.ɲɔ ðe tw_a'mɔr]
 That you-were mine and I owner of your love
 (that you were mine and I owned your love.)

dejar <u>me</u>	a	mí	que	soy	hombre	y	nada	pierdo.
[ðe'xar.me_a mi ke soj 'om.βɾeɣ 'na.ða 'pjɛr.ðo]								
Leave-me	to	me	that	I-am	man	and	nothing	I-lose
<i>(in leaving me as I am a man and suffer nothing.)</i>								

- **Pedagogical Suggestions:** This original song by Ponce possesses a middle range tessitura with few notes below the staff, making it more comfortable for the middle voice. This repertoire could also be used as a training tool for the middle register. Additionally, there are two special moments that singers must aim to highlight in which Ponce makes use of text painting. This occurs on the word “muerte” which means death. Ponce writes a melodic line for this word that reaches the bottom of the staff, through a half-step interval and approaching the word in a descending manner (see example). Ponce further enhances this moment by giving the piano an echoing line that follows the melody of the voice, the pianist should emphasize this *leitmotif*. It is advised that singer plays with different vocal colors that reflect the word death.

Así, cerca de mi, dame tus ojos,
[a'si 'sɛr.ka ðɛ mi 'ða.mɛ tus 'ɔ.xɔs]
Just-like-that near of me give-me your eyes
(Close to me, like that, give me your eyes,)

tus ojos que son luz en mi camino.
[tus 'ɔ.xɔs kɛ sɔn lus ɛn mi ka'mi.nɔ]
Your eyes that are light in my path
(Those eyes that illuminate my path.)

Amarte con pasión fue mi destino;
[a'mar.tɛ kɔn pa'sjɔn fwe mi ðɛs'ti.nɔ]
To-love-you with passion was my destiny
(To love you passionately was my fate;)

hasta la muerte, sí,
 ['as.ta la 'mwɛr.tɛ si]
 until the death yes
(until death do us part, yes)

te he de adorar.
 [tɛ ðɛ.əðɔ̃.rar]
 You I-have of to-adore
(I must cherish you.)

Con tus miradas se borran los enojos,
 [kɔn tuz mi'ra.ðas sɛ βɔr.ran lɔs ɛ'noɔ.xos]
 With your looks they erase the angers
(Your glances erase all anger,)

Pues tus miradas embriagan como el vino.
 [pweɪs tuz mi'ra.ðas em'brja.gan 'kɔ.mɔ ɛl 'βi.no]
 Since your looks they-intoxicate like the wine
(Like a fine wine your gaze intoxicates.)

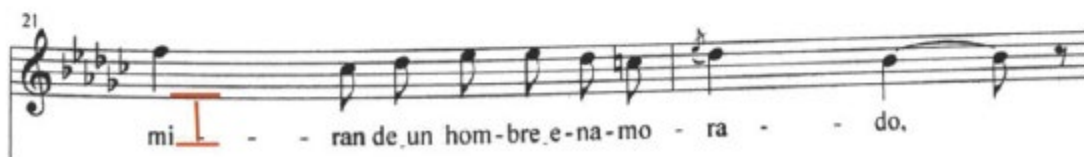
5.3.6 “Cuiden su vida”

- Original folk tune: Anonymous
- Melody origin: Sayula, Jalisco, México (around 1888)
- Text: Anonymous
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1914.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: G^b Major
- Range: D^b4-G^b5
- Time signature: 4/4
- Tempo: Moderato espressivo
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A'

- Subject/mood: suffering, unrequited love, drunkenness.
- Suggested voice type: soprano or tenor due to higher tessitura
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: The tessitura in this song sits in the higher end of the middle register with occasional notes in both, the bottom of the staff and the top. This makes the song suitable for a middle voice with comfortable access to the top or for a higher voice that has the ability to sing below the staff. Additionally, almost every phrase has a “rise and fall” (See example 1) effect starting on a lower note and then rising only to come back down again. This trait makes the skill level of the piece rather elevated, probably more suitable for an advanced singer. There is also an opportunity to practice jaw dropping and vowel modification toward the top of the staff in words such as “mia” and “admiran” by exchanging the [i] vowel for a more open [ɪ] sound (See example 2).



Llevo en el alma embriagadora

[ˈdʒɛ.βɔ̃ ɛl ˈal.ma ɛm.brja.gaˈðɔ̃.ra]

I-take in the soul intoxicating

(I take in my intoxicated soul)

la dulce mezcla de pena y placer.

[la ˈðul.sɛ ˈmɛs.kla ðɛ ˈpɛ.naj ˈpla.sɛr]

The sweet mixture of pain and pleasure

(the sweet blend of agony and pleasure.)

Si bebo vino es por esa mujer;

[si ˈbɛ.βɔ̃ ˈβi.nɔ̃ ɛs pɔɾ ˈɛ.sa muˈxɛr]

If I-drink wine it's for that woman

(If I drink wine it's because of that woman;)

nada les importa, cuiden su vida,

[ˈna.ða ɛs imˈpɔɾ.ta ˈkwj.ðɛn su ˈβi.ða]

nothing them it-matters they-care your life

(no one cares, take care of your own life,)

dejen la mía padecer.

[ˈðɛ.xɛn la miːa pa.ðɛˈsɛr]

They-leave the mine suffer

(let mine suffer.)

Cuánto te quiero bien de mi vida,

[ˈkwan.tɔ̃ tɛ ˈkjɛ.ɾɔ βjɛn ðɛ mi ˈβi.ða]

How you I-love good of my life

(How much do I love you, my beloved,)

cuánto he sufrido sin poderte ver.

[ˈkwan.tɔ̃ ɛ suˈfri.ðɔ̃ sin pɔˈðɛr.tɛ vɛr]

how I-have suffered without allowing-you to-see

(how much have I suffered without being able to see you.)

De qué se admiran de un hombre enamorado,

[ðɛ kɛ sɛ ɔ̃ðˈmi.ran ðɛ un ˈɔ̃m.brɛ na.moˈra.ðɔ̃]

Of what them they-admire of a man in-love

(Why are you surprised by a man in love,)

de qué se admiran de que beba vino.

[ðɛ kɛ sɛ ɔ̃ðˈmi.ran ðɛ kɛ ˈβɛβa ˈβi.nɔ̃]

Of what them they-admire of that I-drink wine

(why does it surprise you that I drink wine.)

5.3.7 “Dolores hay...”

- Melody origin: Zacatecas

- Text: Manuel M. Ponce
- Music: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1917.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: G Major
- Range: C[#]4-F5
- Time signature: 4/4
- Tempo: Andante
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A''
- Subject/mood: suffering, jealousy, regret.
- Suggested voice type: soprano or tenor.
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: This original song by Ponce contains a tessitura that sits in the middle-high range of the staff while sporadically reaching some notes below the staff. The range is wide and the melody also possesses a consistent “rise and fall” motion making it more appropriate for an advanced singer. The B section contains a leap of a ninth that can be quite challenging, especially for the female voice because of the word “acuso” being used at the top

of the staff. Jaw dropping and vowel modification to a more open vowel from [u] to [ɔ] could be appropriate for vocal freedom and fullness of tone (see example). Additionally, use of the chest register is highly encouraged when accessing the lower notes in this song.



Dolores hay que resistir no puedo
 [ðɔ'ɫɔ.rɛs aj kɛ rɛ.sis'tir ɫɔ 'pwe.ðɔ]
 Aches there-are that to-resist not I-can
 (There are pains I can no longer endure)

y que el tiempo tal vez irá calmando.
 [i kɛl 'tjem.pɔ tal βɛs i'ra kal'man.ðɔ]
 And that the time perhaps it-will calming
 (that time may gradually soothe.)

Dolores hay que sin cesar me están matando,
 [ðɔ'ɫɔ.rɛs aj kɛ sin sɛ'sar mɛ ɛs'tan ma'tan.ðɔ]
 Aches there-are that without to-cess to-me they-are killing
 (There are incessant pains that are killing me,)

celos de amores, remordimientos mil.
 ['sɛ.ɫɔz ðɛ_ɔ'mɔ.rɛs rɛ.mɔɾ.ði'mjen.ɫɔz mil]
 jealousy of love regrets a-thousand
 (jealous love, a thousand regrets.)

Cuanto he sufrido, así como he gozado,
 ['kwan.ɫɔ_ɣ su'fri.ðɔ a'si 'kɔ.ɫɔ_ɣ ɔɔ'sa.ðɔ]
 How I-have suffered like how I-have enjoyed
 (I have suffered as much as you have savored,)

de ingratitudes tal vez me acuso y me arrepiento.
 [ðɛ_ɲ.ɡra.ti'tu.ðɛs tal βɛz mɛ_ɔ'ku.sɔ i mɛ_ɔr.rɛ'pjɛn.ɫɔ]
 Of ungratefulness perhaps to-me I-accuse and I repent
 (Perhaps I blame myself for being ungrateful, and I repent.)

Verla deseo, tan sólo por un momento;
 ['vɛr.la ðɛ'sɛ:ɫɔ tan 'sɔ.ɫɔ pɔɾ un ɫɔ'mɛn.ɫɔ]
 To-see-her I-wish such only for one moment
 (I wish to see her, if only for a moment;)

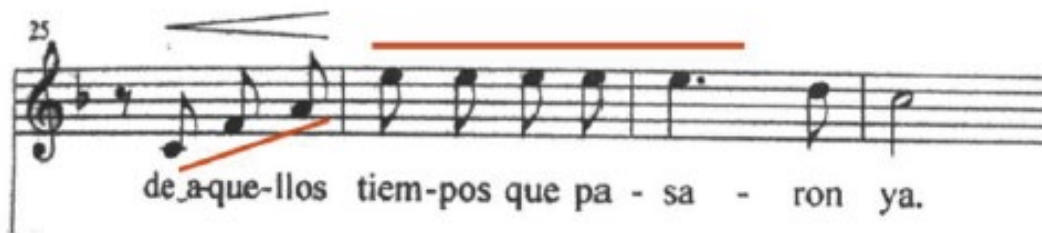
Para implorar su amor.
 pa.ra.ɪm.plə'rar sw'a.mɔr
 To plead her love
 (To beg for her love.)

5.3.8 “El olvido”

- Original folk tune: Anonymous
- Melody origin: Unknown
- Text: Anonymous
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: Otto y Arzos, México.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: F Major
- Range: C4-E5
- Time signature: 2/4
- Tempo: Andantino
- Song Form: A-B-A
- Subject/mood: longing for the past, forgetting former memories.
- Suggested voice type: tessitura is appropriate for all voice types
- Melody:



- **Pedagogical Suggestions:** The tessitura of this song lands within the staff, making it suitable for the middle voice because it never goes above the staff and it includes few notes below. The A section of this song has a melodic line that is rather smooth and connected that does not include significant leaps. However, the B section has a few moments that can be tricky for the beginner singer, making this song more appropriate for an intermediate vocalist. The singer may want to take a little bit of extra time when singing m. 35 to ensure correct placement and intonation of the notes that are written as eighth notes, see example below.



Olvida, olvida, corazón olvida
 [ɔl'βi.ða ɔl'βi.ða kɔ.ra'sɔn ɔl'βi.ða]
 Forget forget heart forget
 (Forget, forget, my heart, forget)

aquellos tiempos que pasaron ya.
 [a'ke.ðɔs 'tjem.pɔs ke pa'sa.rɔn dʒa]
 Those times that passed already
 (those distant times)

Nuevos encantos te dará la vida,
 ['nwɛ.βɔs en'kan.tɔs te ða'ra la 'βi.ða]
 New charms to-you will-give the life
 (New delights will bring you life)

mas lo pasado ya nunca volverá.
 [mas lo pa'sa.ðɔ dʒa 'nuŋ.ka βɔl.βɛ'ra]
 Besides the past already never will-return
 (besides, the past will never reappear.)

Sólo me queda el recordar doliente
 'sɔ.lɔ me 'ke.ða ɛl rɛ.kɔr'ðar ðɔ'ljen.te
 Only to-me is-left the to-recall suffering
 (All that is left is the tormenting memory)

de aquellos tiempos que pasaron ya.
 [ðɛ a'kɛ.dʒɔs 'tjɛm.pɔs kɛ pa'sa.rɔn dʒa]
 Of those times that they-passed already
 (of those distant times.)

5.3.9 “La pajarera”

- Original folk tune: Traditional Mexican Song
- Melody origin: Unknown
- Text: Anonymous
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Possibly between 1910-1914
- First publication: A. Wagner y Levien, México.
- Song classification according to Ponce: NA
- Key: G Major
- Range: D4-F#5
- Time signature: 6/8
- Tempo: In tempo di Valse
- Song Form: A-B-C-B
- Subject/mood: nature, a female birdcatcher.
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: The range of this song along with its tessitura sitting toward the top of the staff make it more comfortable for a higher voice. Additionally, this song would be perfect for the singer working on achieving vocal freedom in the area of C5 to F#5 as it will encourage the singer to drop the jaw and maintain it relaxed throughout. It will be helpful for the singer to focus on singing long vowel sounds and moving from word to word spending very little time on consonants. This song also showcases the typical *hemiola* that is representative of Mexican music. To successfully approach the *hemiola* it is necessary to think of subdividing the measures where we find it (m. 8, 10, 14, 16 and 18) in three shorter beats instead of two long ones as we do in 6/8. It will also be helpful to accent the down beats of the subdivision. See the example below.



Primavera, estación luminosa
 [pri.ma'βe.ra ɛs.ta'sjɔn lu.mi'ɲɔ.sa]
 Spring season luminous
 (Spring, the radiant season)

de perfumes de rosas y de aves.
 [ðe pɛr'fu.mɛs ðe 'ɾɔ.sas i ðe'a.βɛs]
 Of perfumes of roses and of birds
 (of rose fragrances and birds.)

La mañana despierta amorosa
 [la ma'ɲa.na ðɛs'pjɛr.ta a.mo'ɾɔ.sa]
 The morning wakes amorous
 (The morning lovingly awakens)

a sus trinos y cantos suaves.
 [a sus 'tri.ɲɔs i 'kan.ɲɔs 'swa.βɛs]
 to its trills and chants soft

(its trills and gentle songs)

Soy la dulce y gentil pajarera
[soj la 'ðul.ɬej xɛn'til pa.xa'rɛ.ra]
I-am the sweet and gentle bird seller
(I am the sweet and graceful bird seller)

que la aurora, con suaves encantos,
[kɛ law'rɔ.ra kɔn 'swa.βɛs ɛɲ'kan.tɔs]
that the dawn with soft charms
(that the dawn with gentle magic,)

me despierta feliz y parlara
[mɛ ðɛs'pjɛr.ta fɛ'lis i par'lɛ.ra]
to-me it-awakens happy and chatty
(cheerfully and loquaciously awakens me)

con la vida ideal de los campos.
[kɔn la 'βi.ða.jðɛ'al ðɛ lɔs 'kam.pɔs]
With the life ideal of the field
(with the epitome of countryside life.)

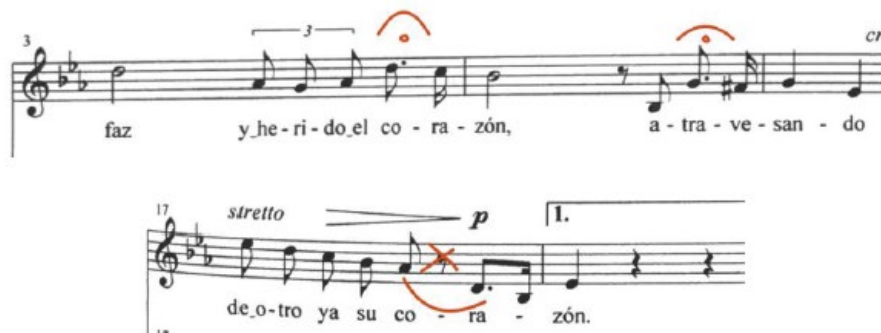
5.3.10 “Marchita el alma”

- Original folk song: Antonio Zúñiga (1835-1885)
- Melody origin: San Pedro Piedra Gorda, Zacatecas around 1885; possibly Aguascalientes.
- Arrangement: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Before 1905
- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1912-1913.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: E^b Major
- Range: B^b3-G5
- Time signature: 4/4
- Tempo: Moderato
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A'

- Subject/mood: unrequited love, suffering, passion.
- Suggested voice type: due to tessitura and vocal demands, more appropriate for soprano or tenor.
- Melody:



• Pedagogical Suggestions: The vocal demands and the tessitura of the melodic line make this song rather challenging and appropriate only for the advanced singer. The vocal part contains big leaps and a line that covers the bottom of the staff and arrives at the top in a rather short span, much like the operatic repertoire. This song is typically performed with lots of *rubato* and especially holding or adding a brief fermata on the words “marchita,” “atravesando,” “enmudeció” and “nada.” See example below. Lastly, a rather interesting syllabification was suggested by Ponce on m. 17 that divides the word “corazón” with an eighth rest. I suggest singers turn the eighth note into a quarter note to avoid interrupting the flow of the word (see example 2).



Marchita **el** **alma,**
 [mar.'tʃi.ta el 'al ma]
 Withered the soul,
 (The shriveled soul,)

Triste el pensamiento,
 ['tris.tel pɛn.sa.'mjɛn.tɔ]
 Sad the thought,
(the inconsolable thought,)

Mustia la faz y herido el corazón,
 ['mus.tja la fas ʒ.ɛ.ri.dɔl kɔ.ra.'sɔn]
 Melancholic the face and wounded the heart,
(the dejected face and pierced heart)

Atravesando la existencia mísera sin esperanza,
 [a.tra.βɛ.'san.dɔ la ɛ.ksis.'tɛn.sia 'mi.sɛ.ra sin ɛs.pɛ.'ran.sa]
 Penetrating the existence miserable without hope,
(penetrate the hopeless, anguished existence,)

Sin esperanza de alcanzar su amor.
 [sin ɛs.pɛ.'ran.sa dɛ al.kan.'sar sw'a.mɔr]
 Without hope of reaching her/his love.
(Hopeless of attaining her/his love.)

Yo quise hablarle y decirle mucho, mucho,
 [dʒɔ 'ki.sɛ.ɔβlar.tɛ i ðɛ'sir.tɛ 'mu.tʃɔ]
 I wanted talk-to-her(him) and tell-her(him) very very
(I wanted to speak with her/him and express so, so much)

pero al intentarlo mi labio enmudeció;
 ['pɛ.rɔ al in.tɛn'tar.lɔ mi 'la.βjɔ.ɛn.ðu.rɛ'sjɔ]
 but at trying-it my lip muted
(however, when I tried my lip silenced me;)

nada le dije porque nada pude,
 ['na.ða lɛ 'ði.xɛ 'pɔr.kɛ 'na.ða 'pu.ðɛ]
 nothing to-her I-said because nothing I-could
(I said nothing to her because there was nothing I could say)

pues era de otro, ya su corazón.
 [pwɛs 'ɛ.ra ðɛ.ɔ.trɔ dʒa su kɔ.ra.'sɔn]
 since it-was of other already her/his heart
(since her/his heart was already promised to another.)

5.3.11 “Por ti mi corazón”

- Text: Luis G. Urbina (1864-1934)
- Music: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: 1912

- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1912-1913.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: D^b Major
- Range: A^b3-G5
- Time signature: 3/4
- Tempo: Lentamente
- Song Form: A-A'-B-A'
- Subject/mood: longing, love, suffering and crying.
- Melody:



- Pedagogical Suggestions: This song has the largest range as it contains the lowest note used by Ponce in this collection as well as the highest. The tessitura sits rather high as well, making it a challenging composition probably more appropriate for the advanced singer. The song is typically performed with *rubato* and adding brief fermatas where Ponce wrote big leaps for the vocal line like in measures 1, 4, and 7 (See example 1). Although Ponce wrote the melody on m. 17 with a descending motion in mind, it can feel rather low for the singer. I consider singing the same line an octave higher (just like in m. 14) is acceptable (See example 2). Lastly, this song possesses an excellent opportunity for text painting on the word “lloro” on m. 21, the singer is highly encouraged to play with tone color to display a sobbing effect.



Por ti mi corazón

[pɔr ti mi kɔ.ra'sjɔn]

For you my heart
(Because of you my heart)

fue un talismán divino.

[fwɛ un ta.lis'man di'βi.ɲɔn]

It was a talisman divine
(was a divine talisman.)

Por ti fue la ilusión

[pɔr ti fwɛ la.ju'sjɔn]

For you it was the hope
(Because of you the fantasy was)

un astro en mi destino.

[un 'as.tɾɔ ɛn mi ðes'ti.ɲɔn]

a star in my destiny.
(a star in my constellation.)

Por ti fue mi pasión

[pɔr ti fwɛ mi pa'sjɔn]

For you it was my passion
(Because of you my passion)

en un árbol un trino

[ɛn un 'ar.βɔl un 'tri.ɲɔn]

in a tree a trill
(was inside a tree, a melody)

que brota y alegra el camino

[kɛ 'brɔ.ta ja'lɛ.gra ɛl ka'mi.ɲɔn]

that it-sprouts and it-rejoices the path
(that buds and invigorates the pathway)

como una canción.

['kɔ.mɔ'ɥ.na kan'sjɔn]

like a song.

Pero la ausencia mató el placer,
 [ˈpɛ.ɾɔ lawˈsɛn.sja maˈtɔ ɛl plaˈsɛɾ]
 But the absence it-killed the pleasure
(But emptiness killed my euphoria,)

a mi existencia no has de volver,
 [a mi ek.sisˈtɛn.sja no az ðɛ βɔlˈβɛɾ]
 to my existence not have-you of return
(to my life you will never return,)

consuelo de mi ser,
 [kɔnˈswɛ.ɫɔ ðɛ mi sɛɾ]
 consolation of my being
(assuagement of my being)

yo sangro de dolor
 [dʒɔ ˈsaŋ.ɡɾɔ ðɛ ðɔˈɫɔɾ]
 I I-bleed of pain
(I bleed from heartbreak)

y lloro y te imploro mujer
 [i ˈdʒɔ.ɾɔ i tɛjmˈɫɔɾ.ɾɔ]
 and I-cry and to-you I-implore woman
(and I cry and beg you woman)

y muero de amor.
 [i ˈmwɛ.ɾɔ ðɛ ɔˈmɔɾ]
 and I-die of love
(and I die of love.)

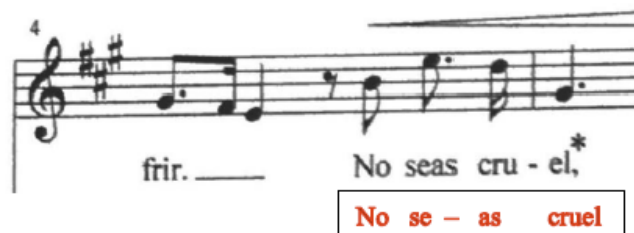
5.3.12 “Por ti mujer”

- Text: Manuel M. Ponce
- Music: Manuel M. Ponce
- Date written: Unknown
- First publication: Enrique Manguía, México. Copyright 1913.
- Song classification according to Ponce: Languid Melodies of the Southern Plateau
- Key: A Major
- Range: B#3-F#5

- Time signature: 4/4
- Tempo: Moderato
- Song Form: A-A'B-A''
- Subject/mood: resentment, culpability, desolation, suffering.
- Melody:



• Pedagogical Suggestions: This song's tessitura sits on the middle low range with climaxes building up to the top of the staff. This song can be appropriate for the intermediate singer because of the leaps and uneven nature of the vocal line. There are two occasions where adjustment of the text or syllables might be needed as it will match the natural patterns of the Spanish language better. For example, on measures 4-5 and then again on 12-13 I propose a new syllabification. See below.



Por ti mujer herida tengo el alma,
 [pɔr ti mu'xer ε'ri.ða 'tɛŋ.ɔɔl 'al.ma]
 For you woman hurt I-have the soul
 (Because of you, woman, my soul is crushed,)

por ti mi bien me muero de sufrir.
 [pɔr ti mi bʝɛn mɛ 'mwɛ.ɾɔ ðɛ su'frir]
 For you my dear I I-die of to-suffer
 (Because of you, my dear, I die of torture.)

No seas cruel, devuélveme
 [nɔ 'sɛ:as krwɛl ðɛ'βwɛl.βɛ.mɛ la 'kal.ma]
 Not you-be cruel you-return-to-me
(Do not be callous, return my serenity,)

la calma,
 the calm

si he de vivir sin
 [sɛ ðɛ βi'βir sim βɛr.tɛ mɛ'xɔr mɔ'rɪr]
 If I-have of to-live without
(if I must live without seeing you, it is best I die.)

verte, mejor morir.
 see-you better to-die

Cuánto he sufrido sin
 ['kwan.tɔ ɛ su'fri.ðɔ sin a'dʒar kɔn'swɛ.lɔ]
 How I-have suffered without
(I have grieved infinitely without finding solace,)

hallar consuelo,
 to-find consolation

cuánto he llorado tan lejos de ti.
 ['kwan.tɔ ɛ dʒɔ'ra.ðɔ tan 'lɛ.xɔs ðɛ ti]
 how I-have cried so far
(I have shed oceans of tears far removed from you.)

de ti.
 from you

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The tireless work of Manuel M. Ponce to dignify vernacular vocal music and elevate it to art music standards was received with relentless criticism. Although he encountered many trials—from his denied efforts to study music at the National Conservatory, lacking the financial means to support his studies in Germany, to the disapproval of his new compositional ideals—Ponce never surrendered and left an incredibly prolific output that is proof of his commitment to Mexican music. Ponce published a significant number of writings about Mexican music where he clearly explained his vision for this new style and the end goal he had of fusing vernacular vocal music with art music. Thus, resulting in the successful manifestation of art song in Mexico.

The careful study of Ponce's writings about Mexican song and examples from his *Doce canciones mexicanas*, present evidence that his vocal compositions, in fact, included music characteristics comparable to European art music. Ponce made use of contrapuntal accompaniments, text painting, modest chromaticism, lyrical vocal lines, sophisticated text setting, and elevated the music partnership between voice and piano. Much like the work of German composers such as Brahms and Schubert.

Ponce's works are a valuable representation of the vocal literature of Mexico, as such, they merit promotion in the concert scene and academic education. The international dissemination of Mexico's treasured melodies was one of the composer's ultimate goals. Manuel M. Ponce left an admirable legacy imprinted in his vocal compositions worthy of execution, diffusion and recognition.

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